

You begin with an idea and a . . .

# SKETCH

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Elements of  
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Mediums

Designing a

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Comic Book-  
Cover.

Todd McFarlane's  
Secret To  
Spawn's Success!

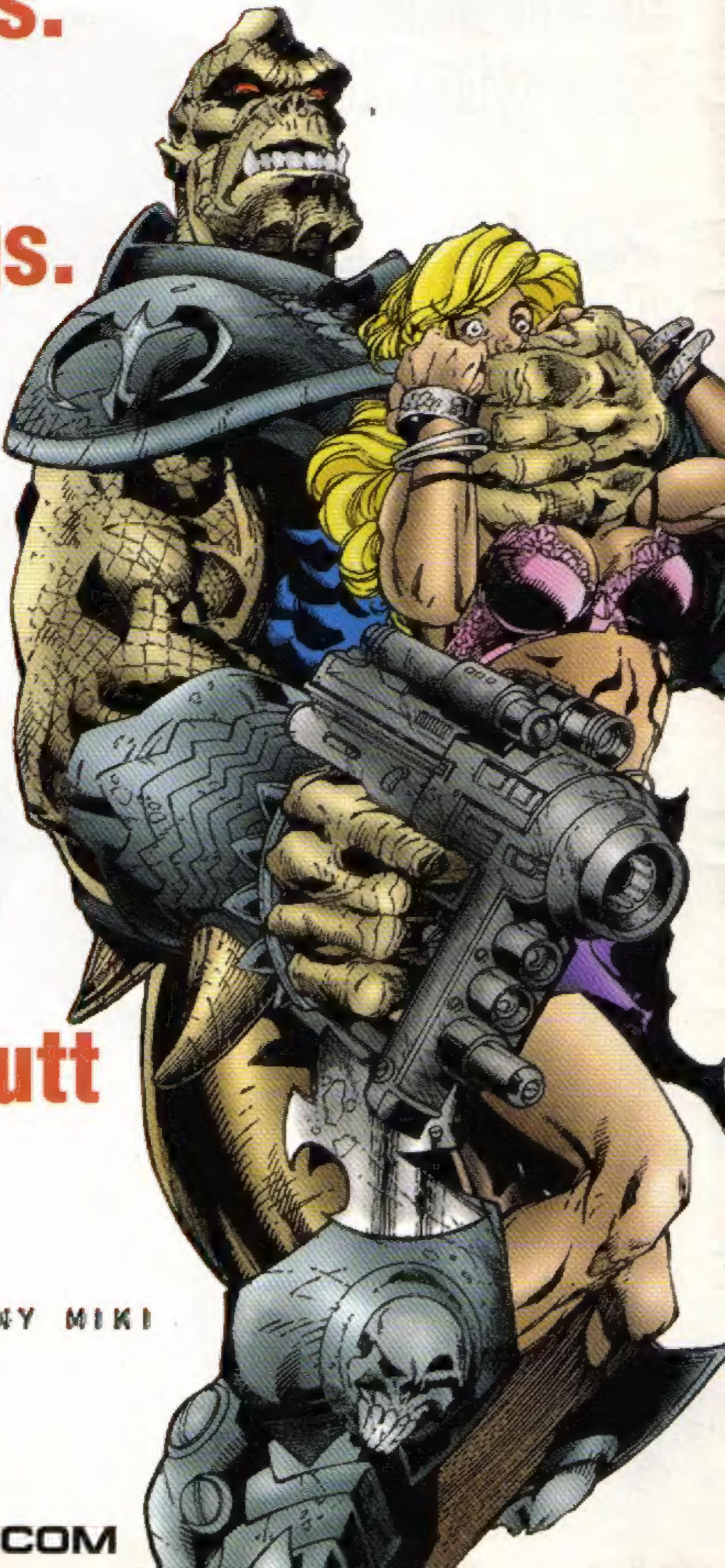
# PARTS UNKNOWN

BEAU SMITH - BRAD GORBY

**We Have Your Woman.  
We Have Large Guns.  
We Have Nasty  
Mood Swings.**

**Read  
Parts Unknown...**

**Or We Will Kick  
Your Puny Butt**



Issue 2

COVER BY SCOT EATON & DANNY MIKI

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**image**

## A note...

First I'd like to thank all of you for making the first issue of Sketch Magazine a success. Sketch #1 was a sell out within two weeks of shipping to the distributors and stores.

Anyone in the comic book industry knows that the orders on a second issue will usually go down at least 25%. Well, Sketch's pre-orders have actually risen over 30%. Not including the subscriptions that we have been bombarded with here at the office.

That tells us that there are many people who want to know more about creating comic books for fun or business.

I believe the more people we have making comic books whether they are for the big publishers or for themselves as mini-comics to share with friends, the more this great industry of ours will expand.

Like music everybody can sing but only a few do it professionally. Comics can be created and taken to your local comic book store to share, put on the internet, or traded at a local convention.

Now to something that has been on my mind lately. Will comic books be around in 15 years, 10 years or even 5 years from now? We keep losing readers to other sources of high energy entertainment. How long can we continue before comic books become antiques. Anybody remember the 8-track player. Send me your thoughts, on how we can bring new readers into this market and share the adventure of reading comic books.

I'd like to thank Todd and everyone at Todd McFarlane Productions for their time and efforts. And, all the creators who contributed to this issue.

bobh@bluelinepro.com

Anyone who had contacted me through e-mail before April 1, 2000. Please recontact me. My computer ate everyone's e-mail address and messages.

## THE COVER...

This cover was created using two different images. First the photo of Tod McFarlane. Once we scanned it in black and white and sized the photo we then placed it over the Spawn image. After these two images are placed together on layers we then added the Sketch logo and issue text. Keeping everything on layers we are able to make editorial changes to each part without starting over. We then saved the flattened image as a .tif file to import into PageMaker 6.5.

Tools: Photoshop 5.0,  
Microtek Scan Maker Scanner.

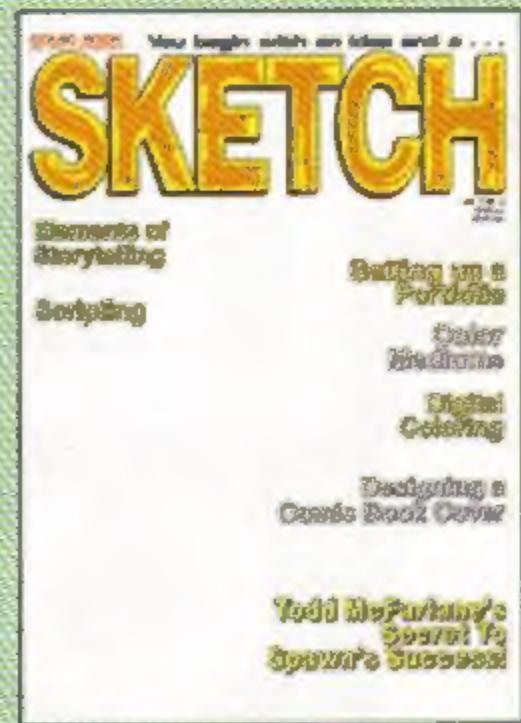
Time: 2 hours.



Color photo scanned as black & white image at 300 dpi. Placed on layer two.



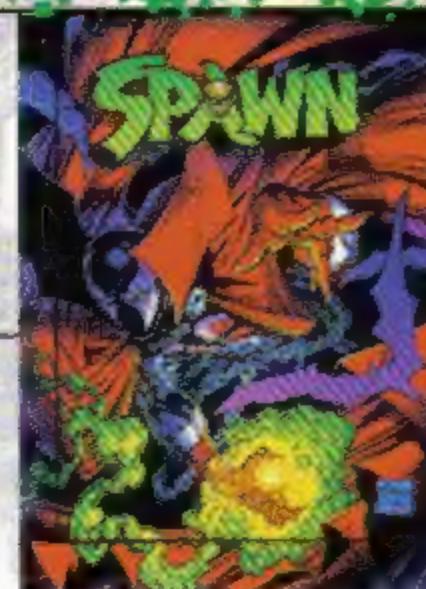
Spawn image scanned as color 300 dpi. Placed under b&w photo on layer three.



Sketch Logo and editorial text created in Corel Draw 7. Then exported as an .ai file at 300 dpi. Imported as layer one.

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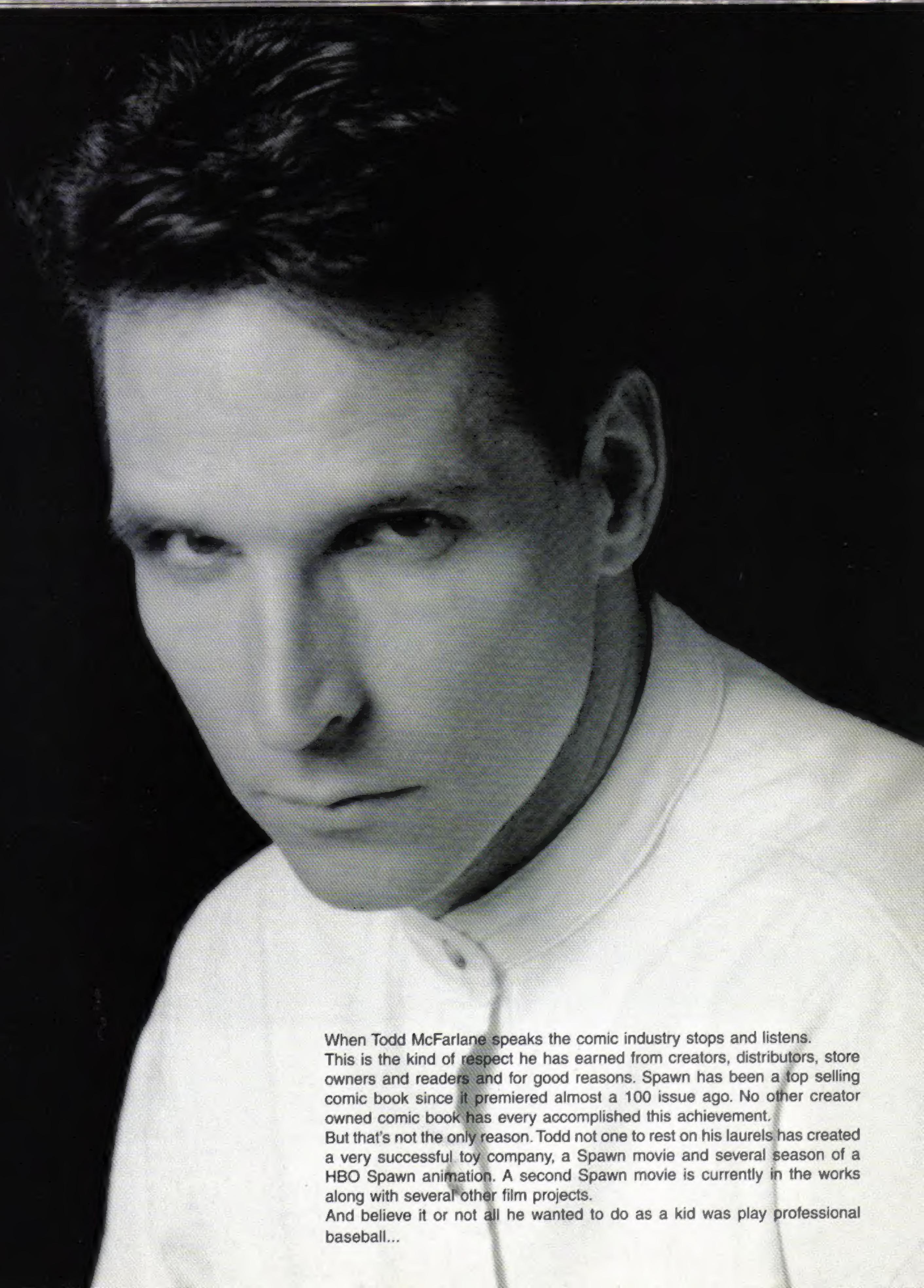
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Business Directory

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# TODD McFARLANE TOUCH MURKIN





When Todd McFarlane speaks the comic industry stops and listens. This is the kind of respect he has earned from creators, distributors, store owners and readers and for good reasons. *Spawn* has been a top selling comic book since it premiered almost a 100 issue ago. No other creator owned comic book has every accomplished this achievement.

But that's not the only reason. Todd not one to rest on his laurels has created a very successful toy company, a *Spawn* movie and several season of a HBO *Spawn* animation. A second *Spawn* movie is currently in the works along with several other film projects.

And believe it or not all he wanted to do as a kid was play professional baseball...



Spawn the comic book

**question:**

*When you were in High School what was it that you wanted to do for a living?*

**todd:**

A professional baseball player. But not wanting to put all my eggs in one basket I started drawing on the side. Either on the bus to a game or sitting on the bench whenever I had time. I knew that only a handful of people makes it in the majors so even if I only spent two years in the minors I'd have something to fall back on.

**question:**

*When did you first realize that you wanted to create comic books as a living?*

**todd:**

I was a late bloomer, I started collecting comic books in high school so, I don't know if I wanted to do it for a living in high school. But there again not knowing if I'd get a break in the comic book field. I also took some graphic and commercial art classes not putting everything into landing a gig with one of the big publishers.

**question:**

*At what time did you know that you wanted to own your own characters?*

**todd:**

I'm not sure that I wanted to own my characters but I wanted to be in more control of what happened. They (Marvel) would have a summit and not include the artist or sometimes the writers. The editor who were wanna-be writers would come up with stuff and then we have to pull it off. The creators, writers and artist were making the sells of the books and I believed we should have more say.

**question:**

*When Image Comics was formed you created McFarlane Productions, What has moved you from comics to making movies, toys and such?*

**todd:**

I had a lot of stories to tell, some work in comics but some works in other areas. Plus I want to get the word out about Spawn. Reach some of the public that wouldn't read the comic but may see the HBO animation or go to the movies. The toys are another outlet, now we're putting out Ozzy Osborn and Kiss and then we're diversifying into the manga stuff.

**question:**

*What about the comic book industry?*

**todd:**

If I thought a hand full of people could turn comics around I'd say sign me up. But it's so bull head from the few major corporations that only see profits for stock holders and do whatever you have to do to make the bottom line. To the store owners who are mostly fans of comics and not business men who shot themselves in the foot over and over. Don't get me wrong there's a hand full of

stores out there that do it right but I could count them on my two hands. Then you have these new guys coming into the market and put out a few books to create a hot property, and, once they get money either from hollywood, gaming manufacturers or wherever all of a sudden they disappear and all they can do are a few little sketches. You can't blame them sales of comics continue to drop and here's someone handing them a lot of money for the rights of their stuff. But you got to find a way to keep it going on both ends. I did. Sure I'm not as involved as I used to be but you see Spawn comics out ever month and we keep the other stuff moving along.

**question:**

*A few years ago you had a hand full of employees (4 or 5). What do you look for when you are hiring a new employee?*

**todd:**

The few that I've hired from corporate America 10 or 12 maybe only one is still working for me. You've got to be able to see past your nose. Just because it's been done that way forever doesn't make it the right or only way to do something. Just because your boss did it that way doesn't mean it's the only way. I'm like a 12 year old when I'm looking at something new. I ask a lot of questions. Can you do it bigger, shorter, darker I like to know as much as possible about what I'm getting into. Some people get insulted when you question the way they do something. But, if they have a good answer then I say o.k. But don't just blow me off by saying that's the way we've always done it. There's always a different way. Sometimes a better way. Now if I'm looking at an artist or writer then they have to have talent, even raw talent. Something to work with.

**question:**

*What are your suggestions to someone wanting to get into this "business"?*

**todd:**

Draw or write all the time and be aggressive. I believe if you are talented you'll get into this business. But you have to hone your skills and go out and get that job. Marvel's not going to show up at your door and say "hey even though we haven't

seen your samples we want to offer you a job". You go to get out there and send out your samples.

My first job was at Marvel and even though I'd been hired by one editor I was still receiving reject notes from other editors in Marvel. And, I was working for them. You just need to get that one break. You get that break and you grow from there.

end.

*McFarlane Toys Rob Zombie.*



ROB  
ZOMBIE

## FROM THE RANCH... SCRIPTS

By Beau Smith

I get quite a bit of mail here at The Flying Fist Ranch. Most of it comes from guys askin' me to set em' straight on how to be a Real Man like myself. Some of it comes from their wives and girlfriends askin' me how they can help their boyfriend or husband be better equipped to be a Real Man.

(God equips em' ladies, I just tell em' how to handle the mental part of manliness. It's up to you and him to work out the rodeo part of it.)

As of late I've been gettin' letters and requests about how to write comic book scripts. It seems that there are a lot of folks out there lookin' to pump their own style of imagination into the world of four color comic books.

I figure it's my turn to give a little back.

Back when I was tryin' to bust into the comic book business (Yup. Dinosaurs ruled the Earth and I wrote my stories on cave walls.) I was helped along by a few guys that were good enough to give me a little of their time and show me the ropes. You might have heard of a few of them—Chuck Dixon, Tim Truman, Mike Baron, Walt Simonson, and Robert Kanagher.

They gave me some of their scripts for format and the mechanics. I studied over em' hard and long. Some of the guys wrote in "Marvel Style" which was what you would call "Plot Style". That's where you kinda' break the issue down into what happens for the artist, he pencils it and then you get it back and dialogue it. This works out pretty good if you are a little behind on deadline, it's not my favorite way of working because I feel I don't have enough control for characterization, but if I know the artist real well and we're on the same train of thought it works out great in that case. I've had that relationship with Mitch Byrd on Guy Gardner:Warrior and with Brad Gorby on Parts Unknown.

Most of the time I prefer to work full script. That way I can play director and actor. More control with the way I want the story told, but yet nothin' is written in stone. I always like to talk to the artist on a daily basis and get his/her ideas and input. With a full script I like to use the panel descriptions to set the mood for the artist more than tell him/her what to do. They read it over and will sometimes call back and tell me that maybe this idea or that idea will carry mystery across better. I look at the artist as the second unit director and head of stunts and special effects. Working with another creative person is the highlight of the story process.

I took my format of script writing from a combination of Robert Kanagher and Chuck Dixon's style. If memory serves me right I believe that Chuck modeled his after Kanagher's to start with. It's a pretty simple style, I think that's why it appealed to me in the first place.

Now I'm not gonna tell you HOW to write. I'm no role model and you should thank your lucky stars that I'm not. Most of ya would be doin' jail time if I was one.

What I'm gonna do is share a little of my writing format with ya. You may find it works for you. Then again, you may just wanna use it as toilet paper. That choice is up to you. This works for a blue-collar writer like me. I've been doin' it for 15 years. Sooooo...I'm either doin' it right or no one has caught on to me yet. I've worked for DC Comics, Image Comics, Dark Horse Comics, Chaos, Comics, AC Comics, Knight Press and others. No complaints yet.....

I'm gonna use a character I created and wrote—Wynonna Earp. She appeared as a five-issue mini-series for Image Comics. She is the top U.S. Marshall in the covert operations branch of the U.S. Marshall Corp. known as The Black Shield Division. They are also known within the organization as the "Freak Finders", the "Halloween Hunters" among other things. They take on the cases that are too weird, strange, or just plain too far out in left field for any other division of law enforcement. Their cases are filed under Full Moon. You can figure out why.

I write the panel descriptions in regular type. Dialogue, captions, and special effects (SFX) are all written in capitals. This is done to set it apart from the panel descriptions and makes it easier for the editor to read.

**Wynonna Earp**  
Written by Beau Smith  
Title:

Page One

Panel One-Night time. Give us an establishing shot of the large U.S. Post Office in Middleton, WI. We can see mail trucks and jeeps parked in the parking area. Everything looks normal.

CAPTION: U.S. REGIONAL POST OFFICE.

CAPTION: MIDDLETON, WI.

CAPTION: (WYNONNA) I THOUGHT I HAD SEEN IT ALL....

CAPTION: (WYNONNA) TRAILER TRASH, DRUG RUNNING VAMPIRES WITH TANS THAT WOULD MAKE GEORGE HAMILTON JEALOUS, THE EGYPTIAN MAFIA WITH A MUMMY ENFORCER, AND WEREWOLF BIKERS.

CAPTION: (WYNONNA) AND NOW THIS.

Panel Two-Shot of three figures in mailman outfits loading boxes into a mail truck. The shadows of night cover their faces. All the boxes have PRIORITY MAIL stickers on them.

CAPTION: (WYNONNA) SOMEONE HAS BEEN USING THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE TO TRANSPORT HUMAN BODY PARTS AND INTERNAL ORGANS ACROSS STATE LINES.

CAPTION: (WYNONNA) THAT'S FEDERAL.

CAPTION: (WYNONNA) AND THAT'S WHEN I COME KNOCKIN' ON THEIR DOOR.

Panel Three-Shot of Wynonna standing out of the shadows. She is wearing an old distressed leather bomber jacket, a white t-shirt under the jacket jeans, scuffed up cowboy boots, and a ball cap. She has her U.S. Marshall shield on a chain around her neck and is holding the badge in her one hand. In her other is a semi-auto S.P.A. 12. gauge shotgun. She has the look of serious business on her face. The point of view is from the mailmen loading the boxes.

WYNONNA: THE NAME'S EARP....MARSHAL EARP.

WYNONNA: I'M THE LAW.

Page Two

Panel One-From Wynonna's POV. Show that the three mailmen are actually three ZOMBIE mailmen.

Rotting flesh, worms and maggots crawling out of their skin and bones. Really nasty. They look pissed.

ZOMBIE #1: (SPOOKY) NO....

ZOMBIE #1: (SPOOKY) YOU'RE DEAD!

Panel Two-close up of Wynonna's face. There is no look of shock or surprise. She has seen every kind of mutant/monster scum that the supernatural has to offer. Mailmen zombies are just another side dish on the menu of the macabre. Her expression is one of "Here we go again."

CAPTION: (WYNONNA) AW, JUST GREAT.

CAPTION: (WYNONNA) DISGRUNTLED ZOMBIE MAILMEN. DON'T REGULAR HUMANS ROB BANKS ANYMORE?

Panel Three-Show Wynonna blasting the head off of Zombie #1 with the shot-gun. Rotting brains splatter on the loading dock. The other zombies hiss with anger.

WYNONNA: NO...IT APPEARS I'M THE ONLY ONE HERE THAT'S NOT DEAD.

SFX: (GUN BLAST) BLAAAAAAAAM!

ZOMBIE#1: YIIIAAGH!

ZOMBIE #2: & #3: HISSSSSSSS....

Panel Three-Zombie #2 is coming at Wynonna with arms reaching out. His nasty mouth open and we can see bugs and worms in it.

ZOMBIE #2: YOU WON'T STOP OUR SHIPMENT—YOU'LL BECOME A PART OF IT!

Panel Four-With a side kick, Wynonna drives her leg through the chest of the Zombie and out his other side. There is a look of surprise on it's face as it is impaled by the shapely leg of Wynonna Earp. Wynonna looks a little disgusted as her boot and leg go through the zombie.

SFX: (KICK) FLIIQUIISH!

ZOMBIE #2: AAAACCACAK!

WYNONNA: EYUCK!

WYNONNA: THIS'LL NEVER COME OFF MY BOOT.

Page Three

Panel One-Show Wynonna trying to shake her leg loose from the insides of Zombie #2. She looks annoyed like one would trying to pry loose a tight shoe from their foot. We can see the shadow of Zombie #3 coming up from the side. She doesn't see it yet.

WYNONNA: GEEZ! GET OFF! I THOUGHT ZOMBIE GUTS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE HARD AND CRUNCHY, NOT...UGH...LIKE MUD.

SFX:(LEG IN GUTS) QUAASH....QUOOSH!

Panel Two-Show Zombie #3 smacking the shotgun from the grasp of Wynonna. It looks enraged. Wynonna has just got her leg free as the attack hits.

ZOMBIE #3: RRREAAAGH!

SFX: (ZOMBIE HIT) WAAACK!

WYNONNA: UUHH!

Panel Three-Wynonna and the zombie are squared off and ready to fight. She has a Clint Eastwood squint as she sizes up the zombie. The zombie is getting ready to swat her with his nasty clawed hand.

ZOMBIE #3: MANY WILL FEAST UPON YOUR PRETTY FLESH!

WYNONNA: SORRY I CAN'T SAY THE SAME ABOUT YOU, GASS-HOLE!

Panel Four-As the Zombie swings at Wynonna we see her duck like a pro and grabs it's arm.

SFX: (ARM) SWIIISH!

ZOMBIE #3: DIIIIIIIIIE!

Page Four

Panel One-Show Wynonna twisting and ripping the arm off the zombie. There is shock in it's face as it sees it's arm twisted off by Earp.

WYNONNA: BREAKIN' THE LAW...BREAKIN' AN ARM.

SFX: (ARM) CREEAAACK!

ZOMBIE #3: YAAAGHHHHH!

Panel Two-Show Wynonna beating the crap out of the Zombie with it's own arm. She is swinging it like a ball bat. Chunks of the Zombie fly off as she whacks at it.

ZOMBIE #3: YYIIIAAGH!

SFX: (ARM) WHAAACK! WHAAACK!

WYNONNA: QUIT BEING SUCH A WUSS!

WYNONNA: IT'S NOT LIKE YOU HAD A LIFE ANYWAY.

Panel Three-Show Wynonna standing over the pile of broken zombie parts. She has the arm still in her hand.

WYNONNA: AFTER ALL....YOU WERE ALREADY DEAD....

WYNONNA: AND YOU WORKED FOR THE POST OFFICE FOR PETE'S SAKE.

Panel Four-Show Wynonna's head turning to a voice she hears off panel.

VOICE: (OFF PANEL) HE WORKED FOR ME, MARSHALL.

WYNONNA: (SMALL) UH,OH....

Page Five

Splash Page-camera shot from behind Wynonna. We see towering over her a ten foot monster dressed in a fancy mailman uniform with hat. He is big and nasty. Looks like he was made of patchwork from a hundred different corpses. he is very gross and has bile dripping from his nose and corner of his mouth. behind him we can see more zombie mailmen all looking spooky and with death in their eyes...at least the ones with eyes.

POST MONSTER GENERAL: (SPOOKY) I AM THE POST MONSTER GENERAL.

POST MONSTER GENERAL: WELCOME TO OUR FOOD CHAIN.

To Be Continued....

There is a sample of what the format of my scripts look like. Pretty simple and easy to read. Trust me, you want your editor to have no trouble reading your script. The happier he/she is the less likely they are to keep you from rewriting a bunch of stuff. I don't like rewriting stuff. I'm lazy like that.

Yeah...it takes a little longer to write full script, but you get more of your story across and there is little room for mistake. Most artists I've worked with are glad to not have to stare at a blank sheet of Bristol board. I try and give em' a jump start. Most of the time we talk so much ahead of time that they know what's coming and already have loads of ideas in their heads.

Like I've always said, "writing comic books is like being the director, screen writer, and actor all rolled into one". My suggestion if you wanna be a writer is to write something everyday. Write for your own enjoyment. Try different things and have some fun. You never know when that script in your desk or computer might be your first sale.

I hope this little look at script format has helped you out a little. Remember, this is what works for me. It might not work for everybody. Take a look at as many other scripts as you can. Pick and choose a format that is right for you.

Talk to editors at the conventions as well as other writers to pick their brain about the way to approach a script/story. Some do drafts and page breakdowns, some don't..(Me!) I work best when I don't have to grind on a page over and over. Like a hunk of cottage cheese in the hot summer sun...I go stale fast.

I hope you found a little part of this educational. If not, well....you helped me kill some time and I got to listen to my own voice...a favorite past time of mine.

Stay outta' jail.  
Beau Smith  
The Flying Fist Ranch

# SEE WHAT YOU'VE MISSED...



B&R FPT #1

## BLOOD AND ROSES

### Future Past Tense

By Bob Hickey, Brad Gorby 32 pgs color  
Blood and Roses set the story for the entire Sky Universe. Thousand-year-old flaming skeletons, alien hunters, and dinosaurs are just a few of the problems that Christiana Blood and Tamara Rose have to deal with in this series.

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B&R FPT #2



## BLOOD AND ROSES

Search for the Time Stone  
Hickey, Smith, Martin, Gonzales  
Chris and Tam are thrown into the 70's disco era to fight off some Jive Turkeys. Then travel to England 523 A.D. to visit Camelot and retrieve the last time shard that will return time back to normal. or will it... and why do they keep popping up in the men's bathroom

32pgs. color and B&W

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B&R SFTS #2



B&R SFTS #1

## BLOOD AND ROSES Adventures

### Hickey, Hester, Nichols, Corroney

This picks up where the mini-series left off. The time stone is complete once more until Marta tries to use its' power for her evil plans. The stone is once again destroyed and Blood and Rose begin the quest to collect all of the shards to put it back together.

24pgs. B&W

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B&R ADV. #3

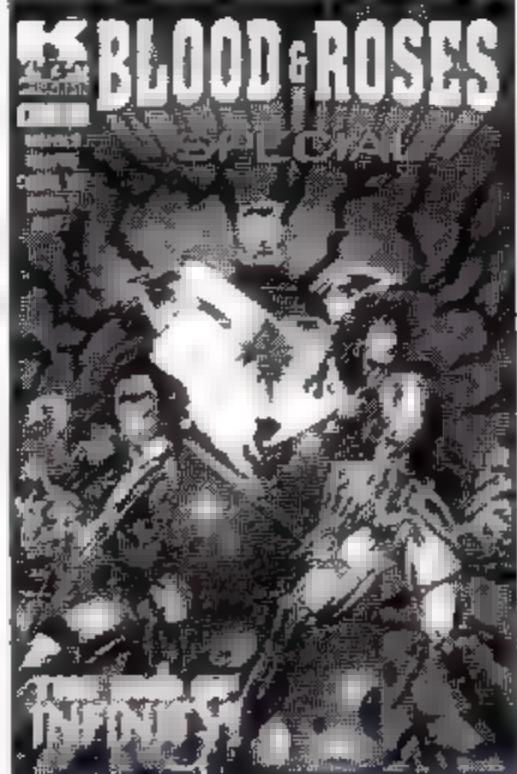
## BLOOD AND ROSES Special

### Hickey, Nichols, Hester, Corroney

This was the last issue of B&R. Infinity gets destroyed and B&R go to Rome.

32 pgs. B&W

B&R Special	\$3
Signed	\$6



B&R SPECIAL #1

## BLOOD AND ROSES Trade Paperback

Collects all four issues of the premiere Mini-Series, over 50 pages of pin-ups, card art and other misc.. Offering a new wrap around cover by Brad Gorby and Bob Hickey. 109 pages. B&W with a full-color cover

B&R TPB	\$13
Signed	\$16



B&R TPB #1

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...BEFORE THE NEW SERIES BEGINS.



by  
Joe Corroney

## THE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF STORYTELLING

Comic books, like movies, are an inherently powerful medium visually. Which is why often, when handled properly, certain films translate well into comic books (*Star Wars*, *Aliens*, *The Matrix*) and certain comic books look great on film (Tim Burton's *Batman* films or the animated series, *The Crow*, *Blade*). As a comic book penciler, it's best to think of yourself as a director and the comic book you are drawing as your film, wherein you are controlling the visuals, pacing of the story, and movement of the camera from panel to panel and page to page. Just as there are certain rules a director follows to make a good movie, there are rules a penciler follows to draw a good story.

Let me start off by saying that I'm one for never adhering to rules too strictly. I often think rules are meant to be bent or broken in dealing with art. If artists didn't ever break rules, we would never experience the unique and influential styles of many artists over the centuries that have influenced a popular culture medium like comic books.

But before rules can be broken, we must first come to grips with what these rules are and understand them. In comic books, more specifically the penciling aspect of them, there are essential rules that always apply and are followed for storytelling in that medium. These rules were passed on to me by my friend and former teacher, Darryl Banks (who is also contributing this issue), as his student and then when I began teaching the Comic Book-Cartoon Illustration class at the Columbus College of Art and Design.

I'll be expanding upon these rules and passing them on to you here in hopes of helping you better realize your storytelling skills as a comic book penciler. Some of these rules may seem obvious and others overstated, but unless you comprehend these basic rules, you won't be able to create your unique, visual, artistic style by being able to bend or break them.



## 1) Action/Motion is Always Occurring

### Left to Right

We have been taught all our lives to read and write from left to right. We should also learn as pencilers not only do we compose our panels and page layouts in a sensible left to right, top to bottom format, but we should compose our designs and action in those panels and pages with the same mind-set as well. Moving the characters and action in a left to right direction in your panels propels the reader to the next panel and then the next page.

(Ex A) In this example, we follow the Aborigine warriors pulling their boat onto shore from the bottom left of the panel to the upper right. In panel two, the dominant female figure in the foreground is leading us into the panel from the left side and looking at the sub-dominant figures to the right of herself. In panel three, the silhouetted bad guys in the canoes are shooting at the fleeing warriors towards the bottom right. The entire design movement from the first panel to the third propels the story logically and comfortably from the left to the right and finally carries us off the page.



Example A

## 2) Be Aware of Consistency and Continuity

Characters, objects, and places should look recognizable and be consistent from panel to panel, even as angles and views vary. This will allow your readers to identify with the characters and not lose focus of the story or be confused when moving throughout the pages or panels.



Example B

(Ex B) In panel one, the dominant portrait of the female figure is recounting herself and other characters in an earlier scene. Ironically, I had to draw this same character twice in one panel (which in essence, is really two panels since it's working as a flashback montage here) and I had to make sure I drew her likeness that much more accurate and identifiable to prevent confusion. Even though as angles and scenery changes in the following two panels, I keep the female figure recognizable not only by accurately keeping her features consistent, but also by using another technique. By drawing her the same general size in these series of panels, it provides an extra consistency to the character and lends to the authenticity of her likeness from scene to scene. I chose to use this technique since these scenes are a series of flashbacks.



Example C

### 3) Clarity in Composition of Panels and Page

Give your readers enough information from panel to panel or page to page but do not over do it. Crowded panels and overly worked pages could become confusing or tiresome to your reader. Details are very important and add credibility to your characters or environment but a good balance in terms of pleasing drawing style and pacing of storytelling are just as crucial. Too many word balloons or dialogue boxes can also crowd a panel or page and slow down the story, but it's also just as important to leave a good balance of space from panel to panel and page to page for balloons and boxes. Especially when drawing a story from a script with dialogue in mind to be added later. When panel borders touch, extra border framing (i.e. thicker frames or an extra border surrounding first frame) for one or both panels is a good device to enhance clarity of your compositions within a page.

(Ex.C) For these three panels, I designed my layout to have my panels overlap and create a unity for the scene. The last two panels create a stair-step technique pulling you down off the page to the next one. Since I am working with a detailed background here to establish the scene and am also overlapping the panels, I decided to use extra border framing. Doing this in the second to last panel separates the images in all three and prevents confusion or awkward tangencies in the line work. Also, the thicker, bolder panel frames gives the desired image within that specific panel a sense of more dramatic importance, should it work with the intent of the story.

### 4) Use Compositional Devices that Lead the Eye from One Panel to the Next

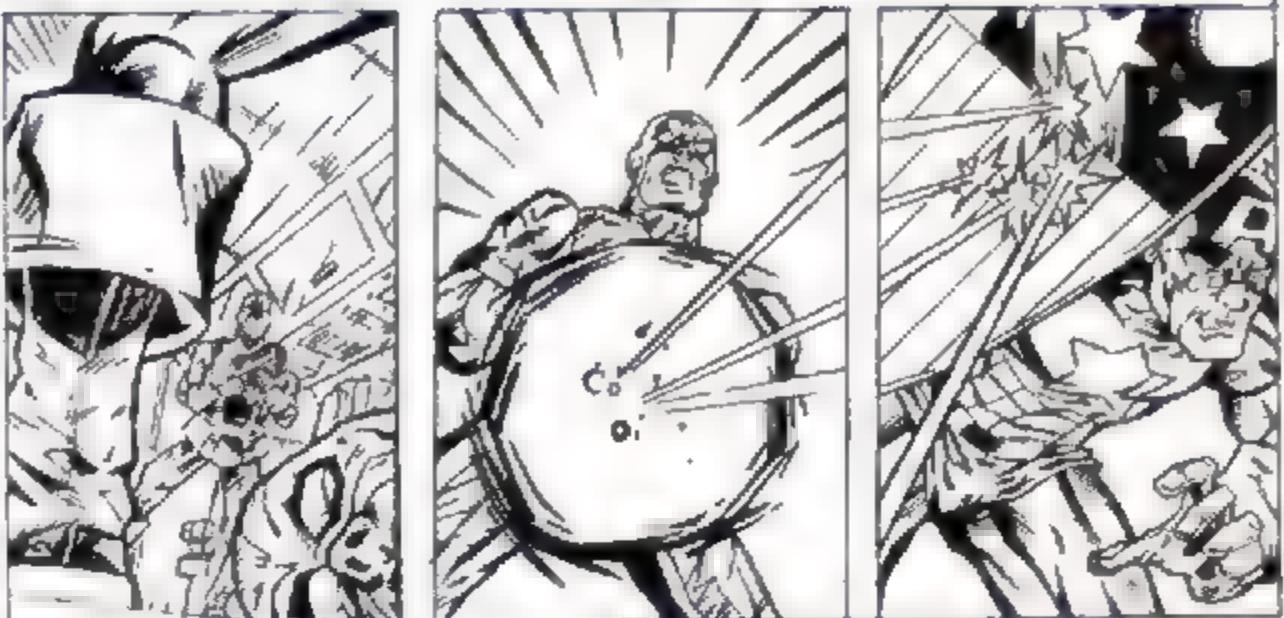
This rule is best applied when used subtly. Perhaps you follow the eyes or hands from within one panel pointing or gesturing to the next consecutive panel (or just moving in the left to right motion. See rule #1). A vehicle, weapon, or object placed correctly or in a dramatic angle in one panel could lead the reader's eye to the next panel also. Even a background composition designed appropriately could be used as a compositional device. Breaking panel borders is another exciting (yet, not too subtle) approach. This approach should usually be used when whatever it is breaking the border is leading the eye DIRECTLY to the next consecutive panel (see rule #3), perhaps even invading the next panel's border also. The use of Z formation should be kept in mind when designing a page (see sidebar example).



Example D

(Ex.D) Compositional devices here may be the use of the Concord jet flying from the left end of the panel, nose pointing to the right in panel one. This carries us back to the left side of the page for panel two. In panel two, the Hydra agent in the left foreground points his pistol at Captain America to the right, then moving the eye to panel three. In panel three, we follow the direction of Cap's glare as his eyes direct us back to the left for the next consecutive panel.

(Ex.E) In panel one, the directional lines of the interior of the plane cabin shoot us forward from the image of the Hydra agent framed by Cap's leg. The lines carry us from background left to foreground right and to the next panel. In panel two, we cut to the Hydra agent firing his gun with streaking bullets, a nice directional device, as they aim your eye to the next panel. In panel three, Cap is blocking the bullets, hunching towards the bottom left of the corner, and carrying our eye off the page towards the next one.

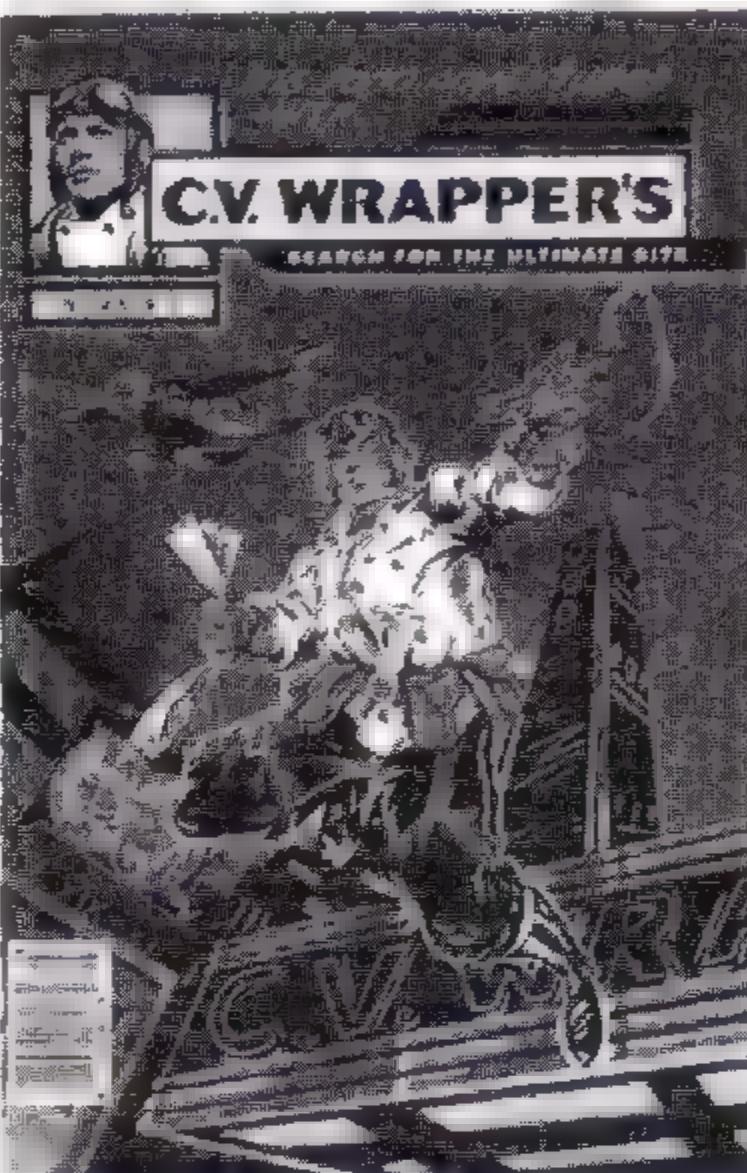


Example E

## 5) Good Use of Perspective

Again, this rule is best applied also when used subtly. Dramatic perspective that is well done heightens the drama in a scene and often goes unnoticed and should be secondary to the characters and story

(Ex.F) For this cover illustration, I use the most dramatic viewpoint, three point perspective, to enhance the action of the character jumping from the plane. The reader's viewpoint is from under the main character as the buildings help propel the figure towards the foreground.



Example F

(Ex.G) In this splash page, which opens up the story, I use three point perspective here as well to move the viewer's focus towards the main character in the foreground and heighten the mood of claustrophobia by forcing the perspective. The buildings in the background here feel like they are closing in on the main character enhancing the mood of solitude, loneliness, and impending doom that I wanted to portray in the story.



Example G



Example H

## 6) Good Use of Dramatic Lighting and Mood

This enhances the emotional and visual impact to a scene and/or its characters. The proper use of dramatic light and shade on a character or in a scene can help you achieve the mood of your story that you wish to convey. It can also be used to amplify the personality, demeanor, and nature of a character. A villain might appear more mysterious if he/she was shrouded in deep shadow, or a hero whose brow casts a shadow over his/her eyes might seem to be in deep thought or reflect sadness. A scene set outside in a brightly lit meadow might reflect peace and calm. But take that same scene with dim light from a full moon and cast shadows from spindly branches and a rickety, silhouetted, wooden fence and the same meadow can become quite eerie.

(Ex.H) The use of heavy blacks and the graphic shapes in this panel enhance the mood of sadness surrounding the main figure hunched over the bed, head in his hand



Example I

(Ex.I) In this circular panel (disguised as a scope for a laser rifle from a would-be assassin) the use of heavy darks across the face of the unmasked TIE fighter pilot creates a sense of mystery and almost sinister presence for the character. The use of dark shadows in the background creating positive/negative imagery allows for background information without detracting or overpowering the foreground figure

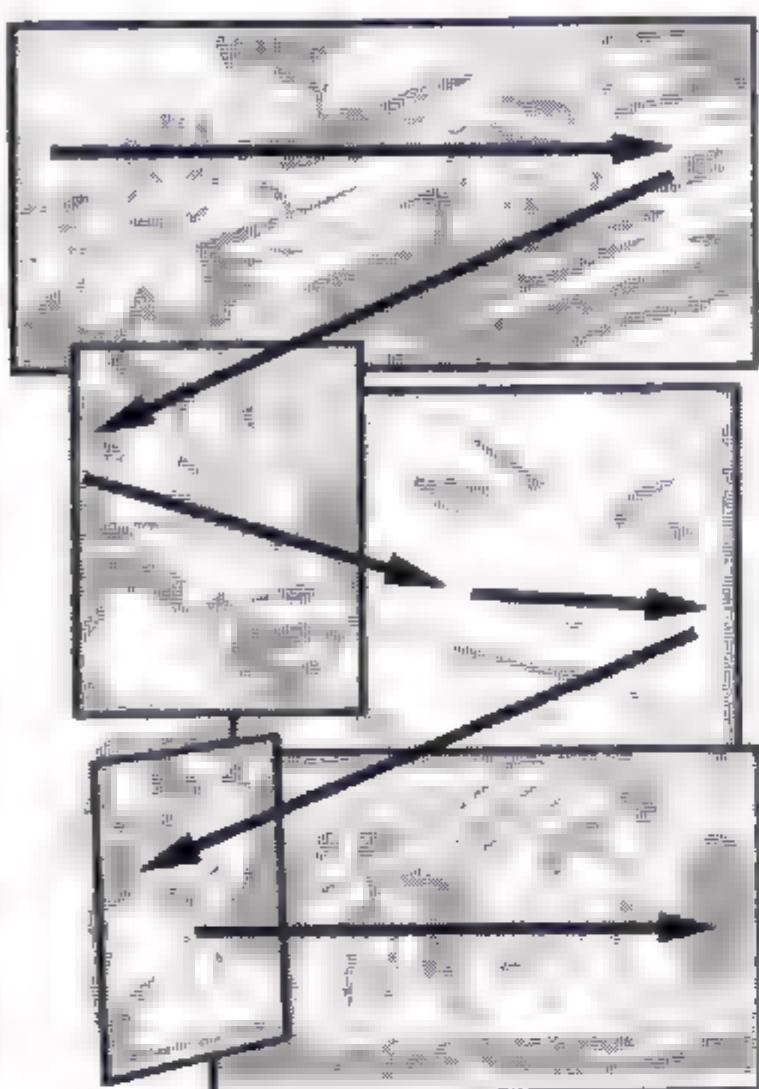
## 7) Textural Differences in Rendering

Keep in mind that different objects require different approaches in rendering. For example, steel or chrome should be illustrated in a different technique than wood, fur, or clothing. Using different line weights and strokes of the pencil can help the reader visually identify and separate characters, materials, and objects in a scene.

## Z Formation In Page Design

The use of **Z** formation when designing a page implies that pencilers draw their images and construct their panels on the page in a sensible left to right, top to bottom format. The proper use of **Z** formation should move the reader's eye from across the top left of the page eventually working to the bottom right. Creating a **Z** pattern with action, perspective, compositional devices, and the shaping and sizing of panels themselves are the principles of this basic but important design process.

Let's look at some examples.



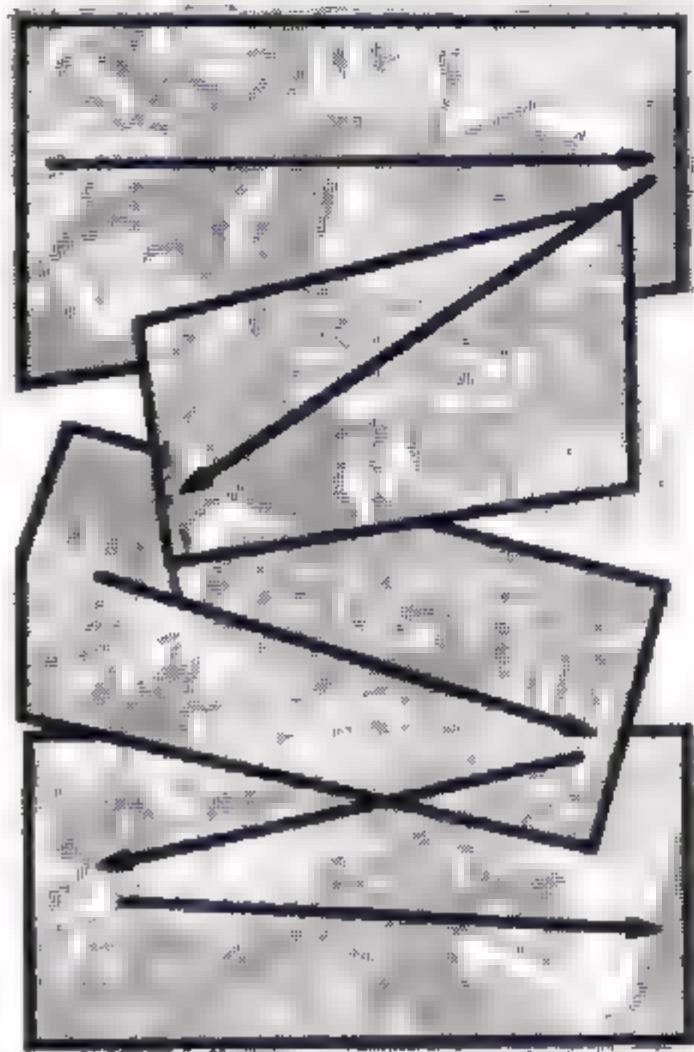
### Example #1 from Blood and Roses: Future Past Tense #1

The penciler designed this particular page with a good sense of dramatic pacing. The use of close-ups, medium, and long shots are balanced nicely. In the first panel, a horizontal design is constructed as both main characters are placed towards either end of the panel. The graphic elements of the sewer water itself enhances the horizontal flow of the scene. It moves the eye from one character to the next across the panel. The second panel overlaps the first slightly, automatically pulling us back to the left side of the page. Within the second panel, the dominant, foreground character is looking towards the right side of the same panel at the secondary character. This smaller figure's arm is breaking the panel's border becoming a nice compositional device that points us in the proper direction of panel three. In panel three, the close-up shot of the female figure's head is slightly tilted down to the right, a subtle accent that pulls us down towards the bottom of the page. The close-up shot in panel four overlaps heavily into the last panel, dramatically heightening the drama and speeding up the action. In this last panel, we pull out for a longer shot of the main characters (again staged left to right balancing out panel one) as they disappear running into the page, framed by the sewer pipes and directional lines from the interior walls.

Notice the extra border framing in panel three that helps separate the action and fine work from the surrounding panels and enhances the drama of the close-ups.

Here's a slightly more *classical* layout example for **Z** formation in this page. The larger dominant figure on the left side of the panel is zapping the ground causing the earth to explode underneath the bad guy on the right side of the page. This is also the largest, most dramatic and powerful panel on the page. This kind of panel is very effective when illustrating a dramatic action scene by showing the entire forms of the characters and allowing plenty of room for the action portrayed. The blast coming from the larger character's hands is itself a compositional device as the rays taper towards the bottom right of the panel going back in space. Actually, the main figure's hands themselves are subtle compositional devices as he is pointing us towards the action on the right. We are drawn towards the general direction of the blast to the left side of the page for panel two.

In panel two, the motorcycle is another compositional device framing the figures and breaking the panel's borders directly into panel three. The positioning of the figures in panel three from top left to bottom right still propel the action towards the last panel of the dramatic close-up in panel four.

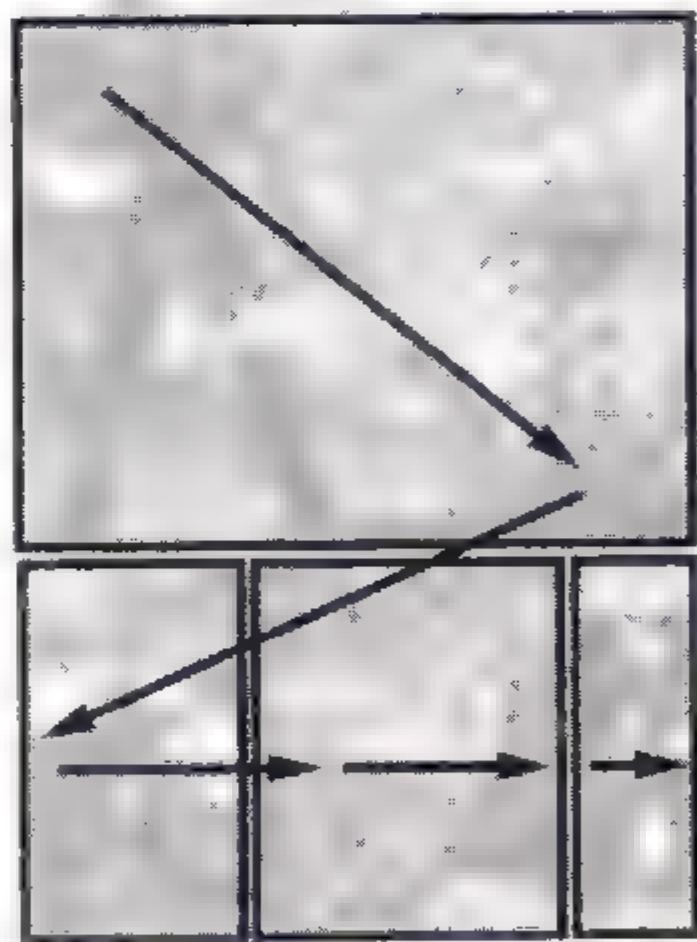


### Example #2 from StormQuest #1

In this example we are dealing with overlapping, stair-step panels still utilizing **Z** formation properly. In panel one, the characters are leaping through the wall on the left in the right hand direction. The use of the sound effect type (KKAROOOMM!) further enhances the horizontal movement.

With panel two immediately overlapping panel one, we are drawn towards the center of the action within that panel and are carried off to the right side by the sound effect (WHUMP!). Another possible direction with this particular panel is to be drawn from the claw of the cyber-suit breaking the border of panel one from panel two and moving towards the dominant shape of the boot in the foreground. Either way, both options keep **Z** formation intact as panel two overlaps into panel three. In panel three, our good guy is kicking the villainous monster off and away towards the right hand side of the page. Panel three is also tilting toward the right into panel four where it overlaps again. The characters in this last panel are staged sensibly as they run from the left to the right and eventually off the page.

The continuous overlapping of panels in the action scene heightens the sense of urgency and quickens the pacing of the action between the panels. This allows no closure between panels by not separating them with gutter space as in the previous examples. By not allowing for closure, the penciler is not giving the reader time to fill in the blanks between panels since the action within these panels is immediate.



Example J



(Ex.J) In this example, I use harder edged, pointy line work to resemble the outer edge of the wolf's fur and thinner but dense, curved line work to represent the inner folds of the fur. For the background desert texture, I use longer, smoother line work with some crosshatching to represent the sand. Of course, the small rocks and sparse blades of grass I rendered help to further lend authenticity to the background. Also, by using the heavier line work on the form of the wolf, and keeping the background line work thin and lighter adds weight and form to the animal and gives spacial depth and dimension to the illustration. It's these small details that help break the wolf apart from the background image and give the separate forms their own look and feel.



Example K

(Ex.K) For this Star Wars themed illustration, I wanted each aspect of the forms to have it's own unique look, yet keep the illustration cohesive by arranging the elements in a dynamic montage. Using the decorative design elements of the type and the ornate, floral design are both simple but contrast each other nicely. The type has a geometric, mechanical, yet soft feel and the inorganic shaping of the flowers feel more angular and detailed. The rendering of the flowing line work in the handmaiden's robes contrast the stark, graphic silhouette of the young queen's portrait. I allow texture by using positive/negative rendering here as well, with the folds working into the negative space as lighter areas, along with the lighter areas of the feathers in contrast to the outer graphic edges. I use the x's here in these illustrations to indicate to the inker (in this case myself) where the flat blacks will be filled in with the india ink. This saves the penciler time and allows for a more graphic, efficient style. This comes in very handy especially when penciling a comic book page or illustration for approval under deadline.

Though these are the rules I most often find helpful and applicable to comic book storytelling there are undoubtedly many more that could apply to the medium. Consider these elements as a starting point every time you begin a page but don't limit yourself to just what is written here. Comics are a medium where nothing is limited to the imagination and I highly recommend you check out *Understanding Comics* by Scott McCloud for an even more in-depth and philosophical approach to the medium and your work.

Feel free to contact Joe at [jcorroney@earthlink.net](mailto:jcorroney@earthlink.net)

## More Basics to Inking Comics

After covering some of the basic materials last time, I assume you're ready to practice some inking. So what's stopping you? Oh, yeah, you need something to actually ink! I thought I'd talk about some ways to practice inking that I used when I was starting out.

One thing I suggest to beginning inkers is to start out inking right over your favorite comics! "But Dan", you say to me, "Those comics are already inked!" Exactly! You'll learn a lot by going over the lines of an accomplished inker. Take note of where the lines are thicker to suggest mass or shadow. Notice how delicate the lines become on a pretty girl's face or hair. You can learn much about depth and shading techniques this way.

"But Dan", you say to me again, "I don't want to ruin my favorite comic books by slopping ink all over them." After I stare at you blankly for a minute, I would then patiently explain that I meant you should first take a photocopy of a page of your favorite comic book, say like PowerDude, and blow it up on a copier so that the art is as close to original size as possible (10" x 15" art area)

That way you can get a reasonable idea of how thick to make your lines and how they will look when reduced back down to comic book size. Use the light setting so that the colors turn into light grays and you can see the line work clearly. You could also use black and white artwork that you see in magazines by comic pros.

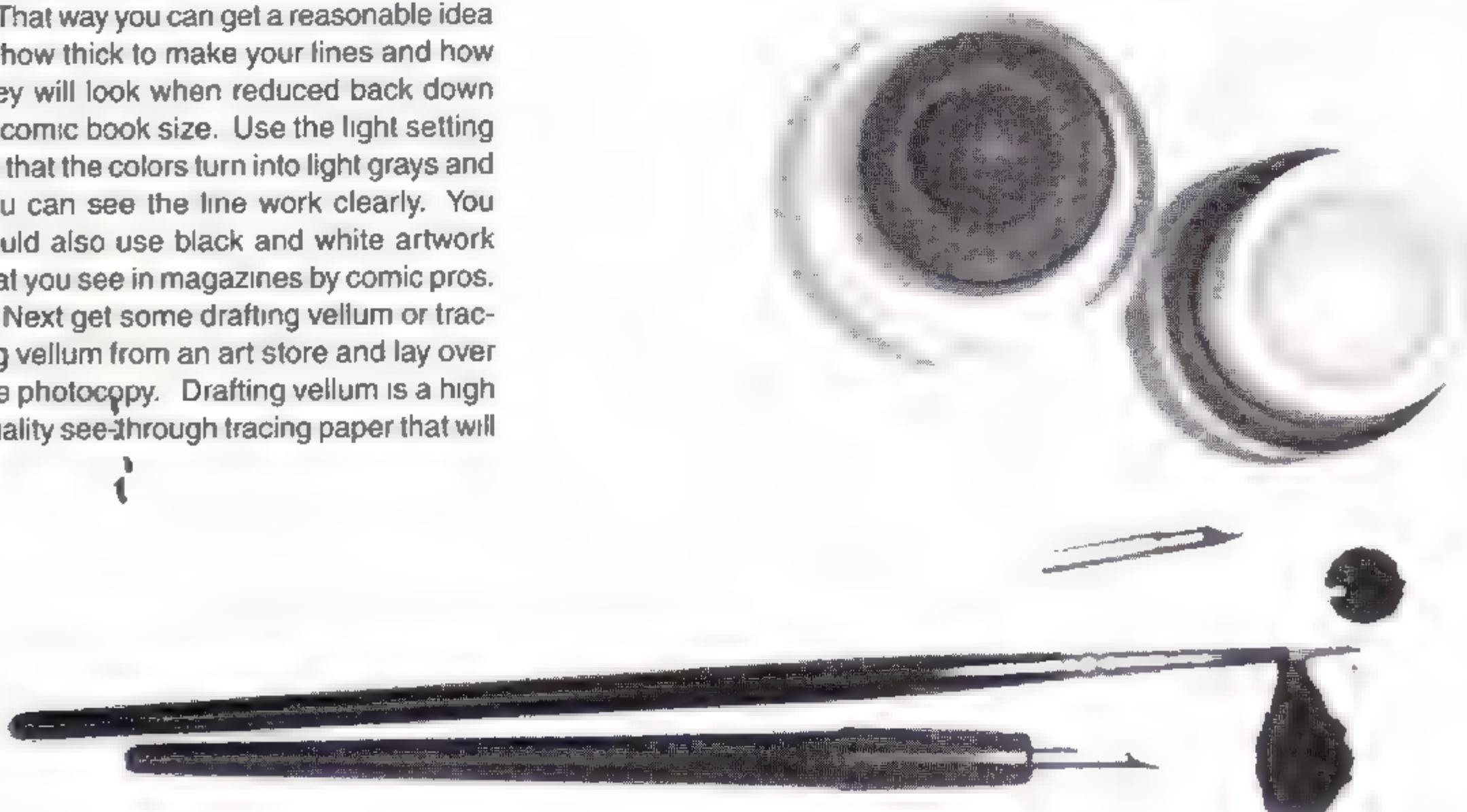
Next get some drafting vellum or tracing vellum from an art store and lay over the photocopy. Drafting vellum is a high quality see-through tracing paper that will

actually hold up to pen, brush, and ink. It is not cheap tracing paper like you buy at the discount stores so make sure you are using the right stuff! It's tricky to work with, but I have a few tips that might help.

Cut the drafting vellum to the same size as a comic book art page (11" x 17") and then lightly (and I mean VERY lightly) spray one side of it with a spray adhesive and lay it over the photocopy. Too much spray will make it hard to peel off the vellum later and will actually pull off the photocopy ink which you won't want to do. I hear complaints that vellum is hard to work with since it buckles up when the ink lays wet on it and makes it hard to see through. Spraying it helps hold it down flat so you can concentrate on your linework.

My second tip for working with vellum is to use markers to fill in black areas. Brushing ink into large black areas does make the vellum wrinkle, so you can avoid this problem by simply using markers for this task. Brushes work great on vellum and you can get very delicate line work with practice. Crowquill pens are a

by  
Dan Davis





Green Lantern Art by Darryl Banks and Dan Davis copyright 1999 DC Comics

bit harder to use. They can tear up the surface and the ink can run a bit, but they are almost always necessary to use for fine detail work and to show off your crosshatching. Fine point markers can also be used for straight lines, circles, and ellipses on machinery and buildings in the backgrounds.

One other advantage of this practice method — no erasing! When you are finished with the page, peel back the vellum. The backside may still be a little sticky so I suggest you lay it back down

on top of a blank 11" x 17" photocopy sheet. This will protect the artwork and prevent dirt from getting on the back of your vellum also.

Now take an honest look at your work and compare it to the original art. Is PowerDude as cool as he looked in the original drawing? Are your lines as slick as the pro art? Are the curves sharp and clean? Is the cross-hatching clear or muddy? Do your lines look shaky or confident? One more way to critique your own inking is to reduce your ink work back down to comic book size and see if it still looks good at this size or if you notice mistakes. Another old trick is to hold a mirror up to your artwork and for some reason it is like seeing it for the first time.

Mistakes jump out at you this way and you may notice for the first time that PowerDude's eyes are crooked or you drew him with three arms instead of his normal two! Be critical of your work (an editor sure will be), but give yourself a break, too. Nobody starts out perfect and only by the actual process of practicing can your work get better!

Being able to "reproduce" the original inker's work is a first step learning experience in the process of learning how to ink well. He or she made a lot of decisions when inking the pencil art. Decisions that you didn't have to make by copying the ink work. But it can be a valuable lesson in learning how to make lines look professional. How rendering shiny objects is different from rendering muscles, which is different from rendering wood, which is different from—you get the idea. When inking photocopies of pencil drawings you can use the same vellum techniques and it will be up to you to make the choices that will add style clarity and pizazz to the pencil art.

You can always ink your own pencils on 2-ply bristol board, but a lot of my inking practice came from photocopies of professional pencils I got from other artists or comic book companies. Magazines, books, and even the internet can be sources of finding pencil drawings to ink and if you use vellum you can always ink the same pencil art again if you want.

It was a pleasure inking Darryl Banks on a recent issue of Green Lantern and since Darryl told me he was pretty pleased with the results I thought I'd include some details on how I did it.

Page 13 of Issue 121 was one of those great moments where GL and his pals are

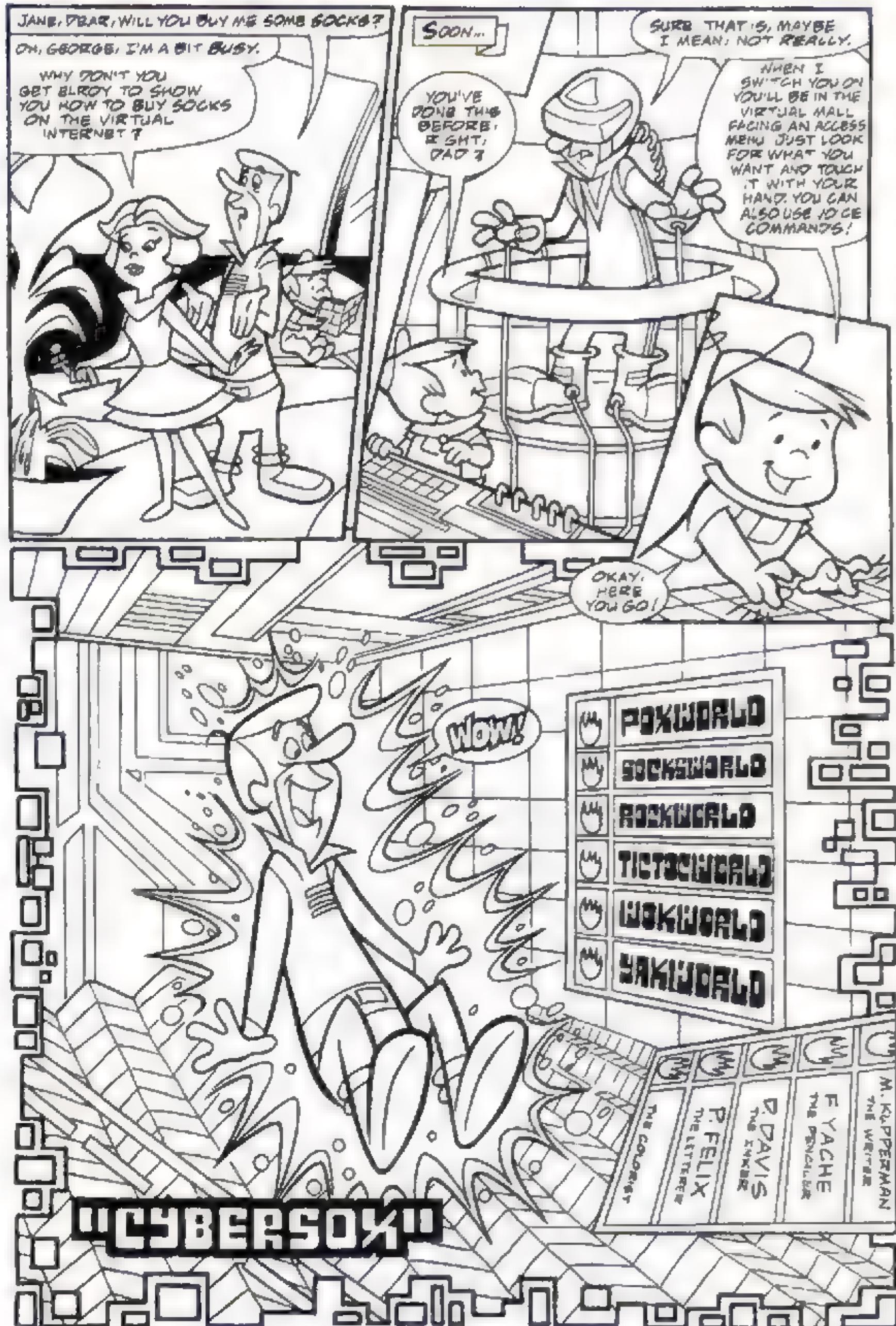
ready for action. This piece was done with a Windsor Newton #2 brush and a Hunt crowquill pen, my weapons of choice. I used Higgins Black Magic India Ink and after painting the sky solid black, went back and dotted the stars on with a second brush I keep just for white using a bottle of Pelican Graphic White.

Most of the characters got the brush treatment for their contour or outlines while the smaller characters were done all with a pen. Faces and hands were usually done with a pen also. I used a very loose scratchy pen technique to illustrate the gradual change from dark space to the highlight that runs across the top right corner of the page. Notice how thick the lines are around Green Lantern who is in the extreme foreground and how thin they get around the smaller characters in the back. This helps the illusion of depth and reinforces what Darryl knew when he craftily positioned things, it keeps all eyes on our star, GL, who you notice first until you circle around the page taking in the total effect. Nice job, Darryl!

The thinnest lines are on the planet in the background. Even though it is massive, it is just a backdrop for our characters to look dramatic against, and of course part of the total cosmic feel of space, so you don't want to draw too much attention to it, but ink it with clarity.

In stark contrast is our other space hero George Jetson! This adventure has George popping into a cyberworld as seen in the biggest panel on page one of Issue 15. Of course the style is more cartoony and I find that the brush is ideal for this kind of look. I still use a pen on the face and hands and small details, but a nice thick brush line reminds me of fluid animation and a bold line around the characters helps them pop out from the backgrounds.

When George pops into the cyberworld he is inked very heavy, because there is so much detail around him and because the panel is so open with no solid black areas. If you don't have solid blacks to work with to draw your eye to the character, then you certainly have to have a few bold brushstrokes to make sure your eye sees George with clarity and separated from the busy background. Just be careful not to ink a solid fat outline around Jetson or he will think he is in a coloring book instead of a comic book! Always use a thick to thin line approach.



Flintstones/Jetsons art by Fernando Yache and Dan Davis, copyright Hanna-Barbera Productions and DC Comics

## Variety!

Variety is the spice of life AND comics. It's good to practice many different styles since you never know where your next job might be coming from and you want to be ready for anything. I've shown on these pages some of the different styles I have worked in. Always try to match and compliment the style of the pencil artist and use the best tool for the job, whether it be pen, brush, or your elbow!

You can reach Dan for questions and comments at [dand@bluelinepro.com](mailto:dand@bluelinepro.com)

## Do you remember the old wooden artist mannequins?

Dear aspiring illustrators,

I would like to say a few words about art tools. Tools of the Trade have changed for us over the years in many aspects. If we wanted to visualize a color scheme for a costume we designed we could use marker pads and markers to throw down our ideas. Now we can use computers to scan our sketch, import it into a program like Photoshop and color the costume digitally.

Do you remember the old wooden artist mannequins? They were meant to help artist with poses for drawing the human figure. Now in modern times we can use our computer programs like Poser to accomplish the same task but with greater detail. Now if you really want to go even further with the mannequin theme to help your drawings, I have another fun suggestion. This tip is both enjoyable and tax deductible for the professional artists out there.

Many people into comics today usually are into action figures also. Today's figures have more detail and superior sculpting than ever before. Look at the 12" military figures and equipment by 21st Century toys or Dragon Figures Incorporated (the company that makes the big Jackie Chan figure) for example. These toys can be used to not only help you with poses with their great articulation but also with weapon details. Hold the doll close to your art lamp and look at the shadows on the face and etc. Now you can practice figures in dramatic lighting!

You can't get enough practice when it comes to sketching from real life. In art class, do you remember still life drawing? Drawing plants and chairs and the other usual things in a still life may not sound interesting but it is helpful. Since we're on the subject of action figures as an art tool try this: get a big flat surface that doesn't have any distracting details on it and place 3 or 4 of your favorite action figures of similar scale on it.

Some may be in standing poses and one may be sitting. Put a vehicle or other related equipment in the composition as well. Now add a strong light source to your still life and do some sketches of your set up. Sketch from multiple view points like worms eye view and birds eye view. Notice the cast shadows from the figures on the flat surface. You may even photograph your still life for reference.

Well I hope my tips on modern tools of the trade will be useful to you and keep checking out Sketch Magazine for other cool tips and advise.

Darryl Banks

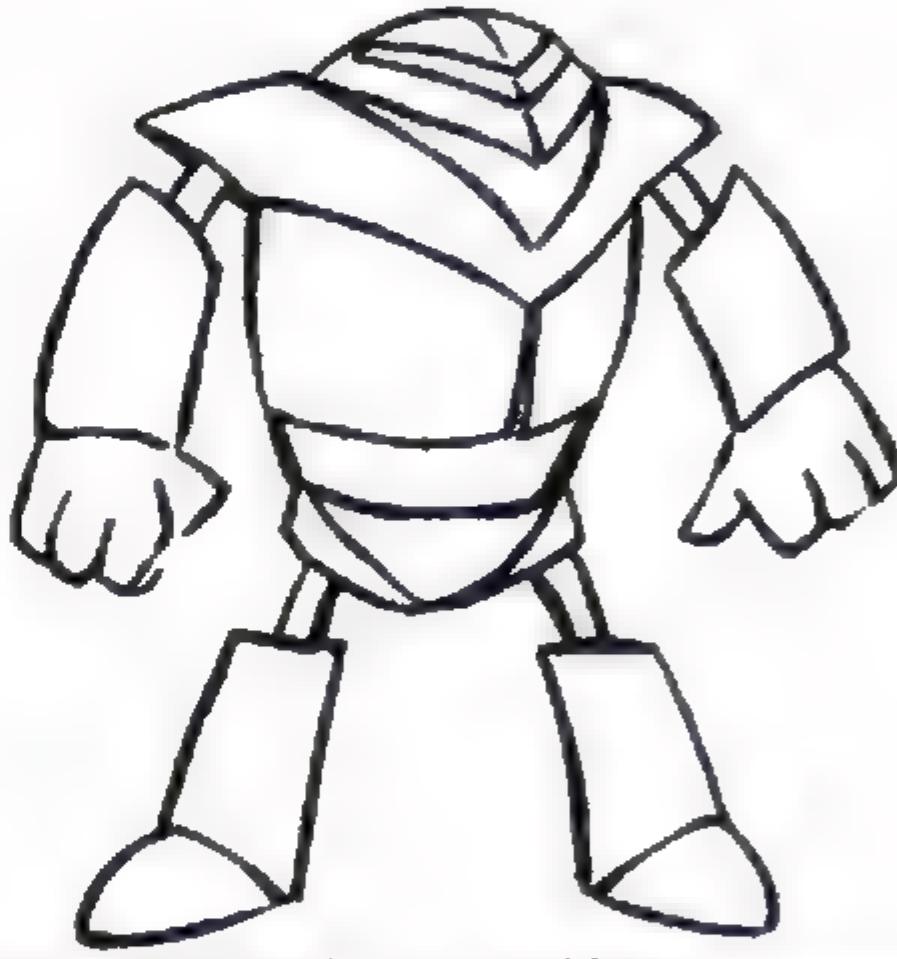
## Manga

One on the cool things about some of the manga comics is the giant robots. I'm not sure when robots became part of the manga culture but they have developed some of the coolest designs ever imagined. Even some of the most popular American comics such as BATTLECHASERS have borrowed from the manga robot concept. Manga 'bots come in many shapes sizes and looks. One thing you want to remember is that when you are designing a robot to be drawn in your comic, the more 'tech' stuff you place on it the harder it will be to draw him over and over. If this robot is only making a cameo appearance then load it up with 'tech'.

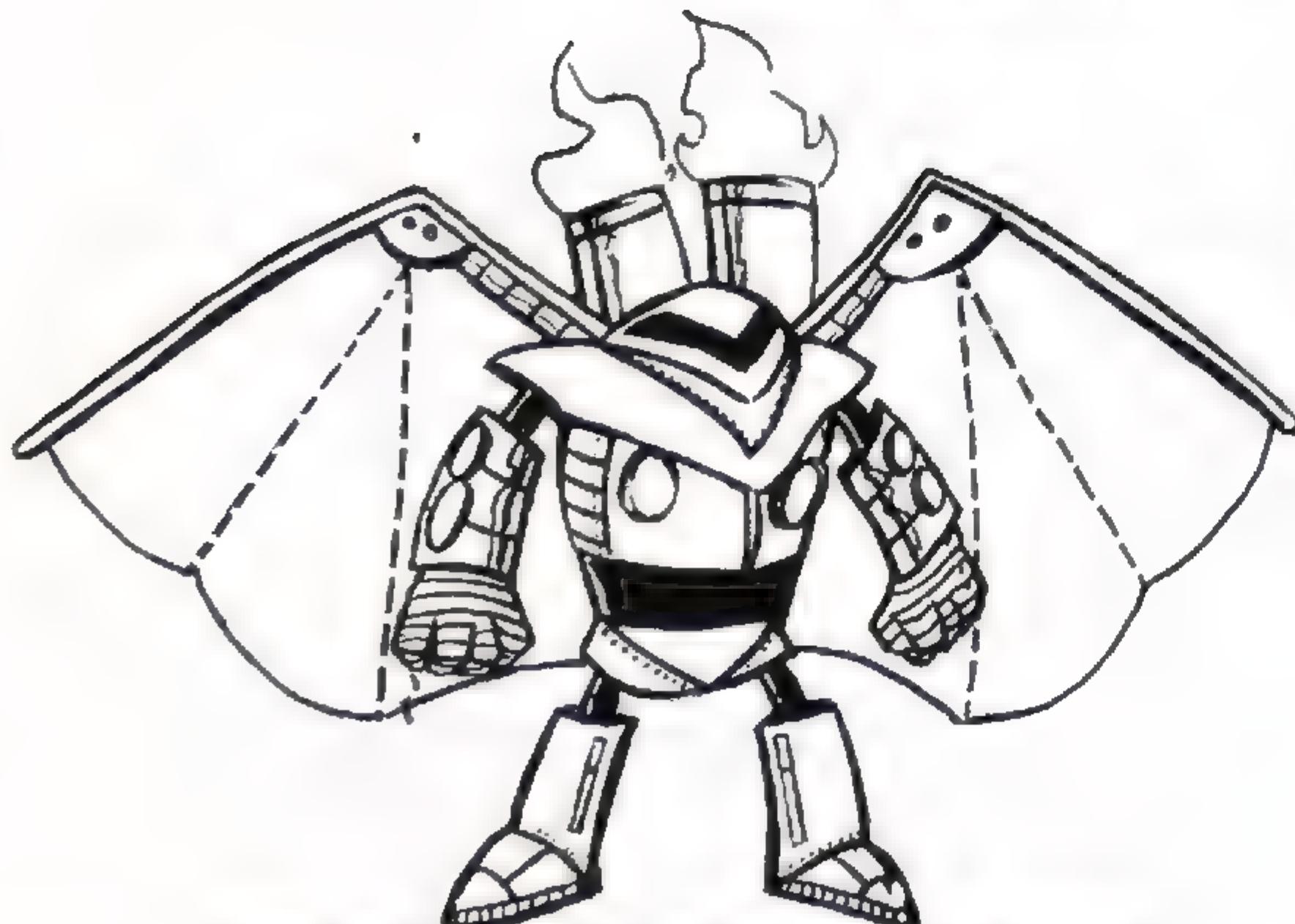
A lot of time a simple design can lead to a very nice looking robot.



We'll start with an egg shape.

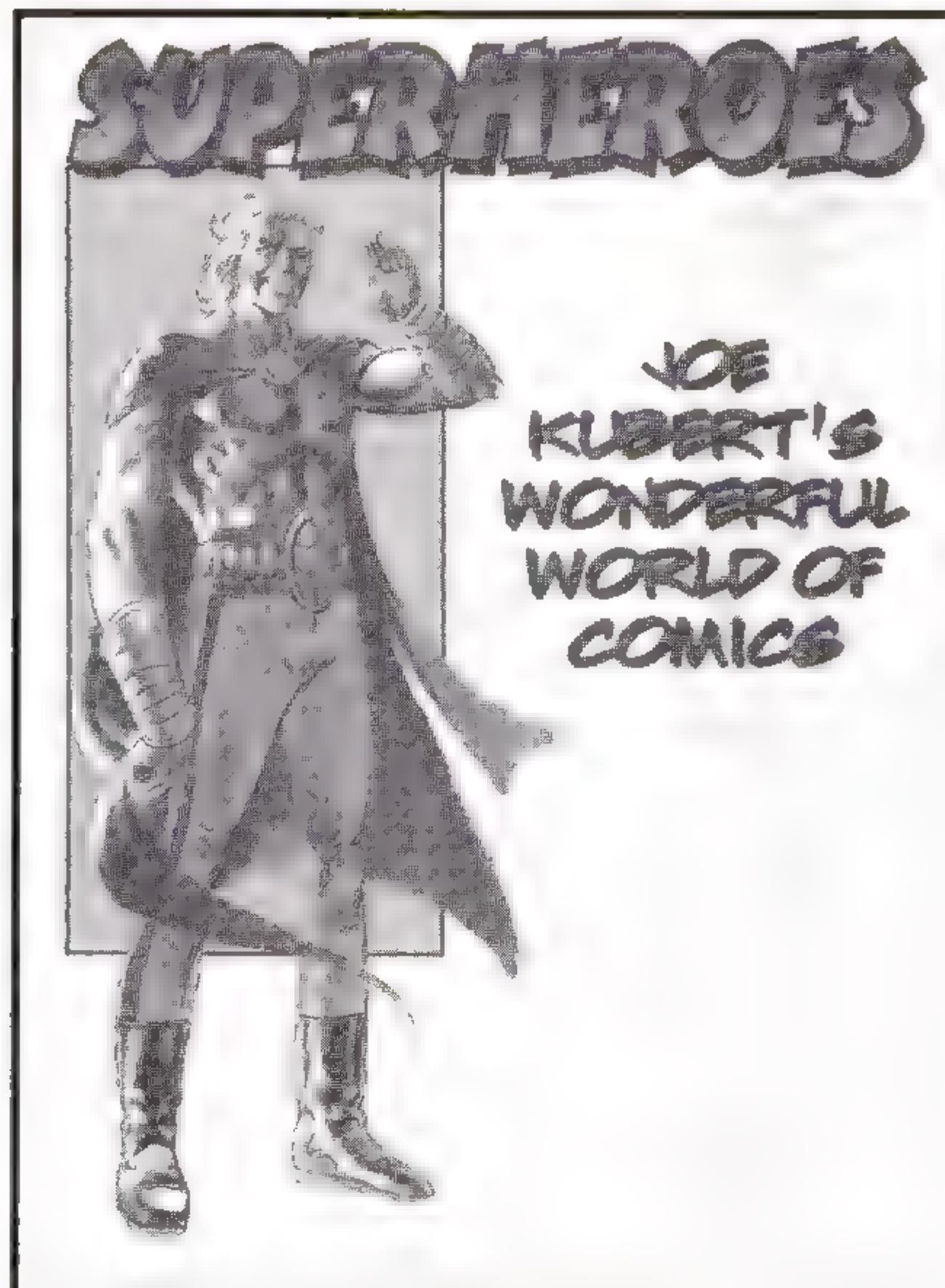


Then add a head, arms and legs. We'll keep the head small and close to the body. Since the head usually holds the pilot we need to keep it close as possible to the body. When designing the arms and legs you need to imagine what this 'bot will be doing and how will it use these extensions.



Since this character will only appear in a few panels we'll 'tech' it up a little.

The only thing holding you back is your imagination.  
Next time Super Deformed...



## SUPERHEROES

Joe Kubert's Wonderful World Of Comics

By Joe Kubert

Published by Watson-Guptill Publications

Over the years Joe Kubert has been many things artist, writer, editor, teacher and entrepreneur. He established The Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art Inc. in 1976; the first and only accredited school devoted to cartoon-graphic arts curriculum. Joe's work encompasses many characters including Hawkman, Batman, The Flash, and Sgt. Rock for DC. He was involved in the Burroughs-licensed titles for which he drew Tarzan. Joe's wrote and illustrated several graphic novels including Tor, Abraham Stone and Fax from Sarajevo.

SUPERHEROES isn't Joe's sketchbook with a little text added, but a well planned book on his creative processes. Heroes and Superheroes, Superheroes in Three Dimensions, Emotion and Motion, Creating Characters with style, Backgrounds, Telling the Story, The Creative Process, these are just a few of the subjects that are touched on by Joe in this book.

SUPERHERO focuses on the creation of characters, drawing them in perspective and laying out comic book pages. This is a book that any creator would

enjoy.

In the foreword Joe states, *The only way anybody learns to draw is by drawing*, this is the most important thing for new artist to understand.

SUPERHEROES Joe Kubert's Wonderful World Of Comics is recommended to any artist wanting to learn more about creating characters and illustrating a comic book page.

Rated \*\*\*\*

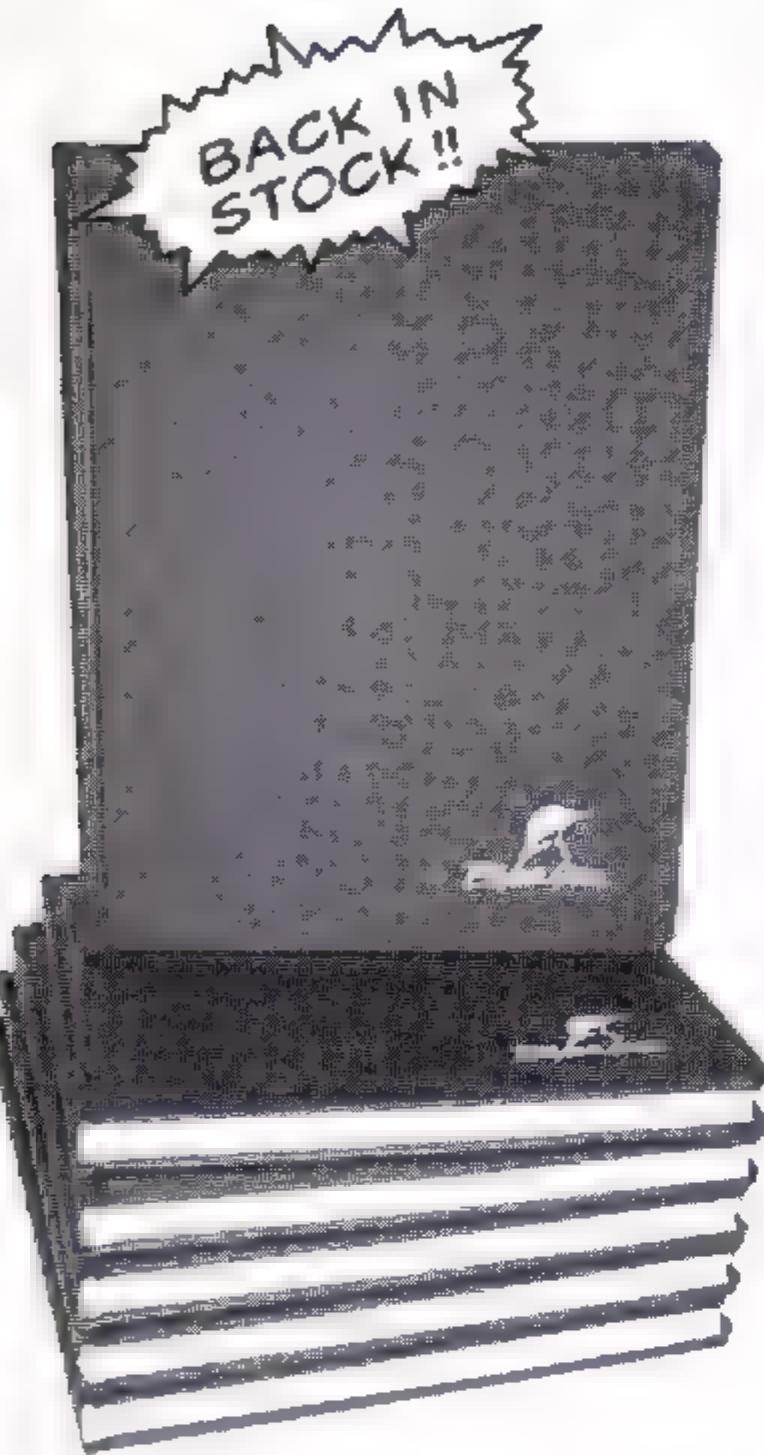
Passing comments. I approached this book as if it were a 'course book' for the Kubert school. I was mistaken. This book offers 60 color illustrations and 300 black-and-white illustrations within its 144 pages, a lot of information for twenty bucks.

Joe's willingness to share his ideas of creating superheroes and comics is the best thing about SUPERHEROES.

T. Hunter

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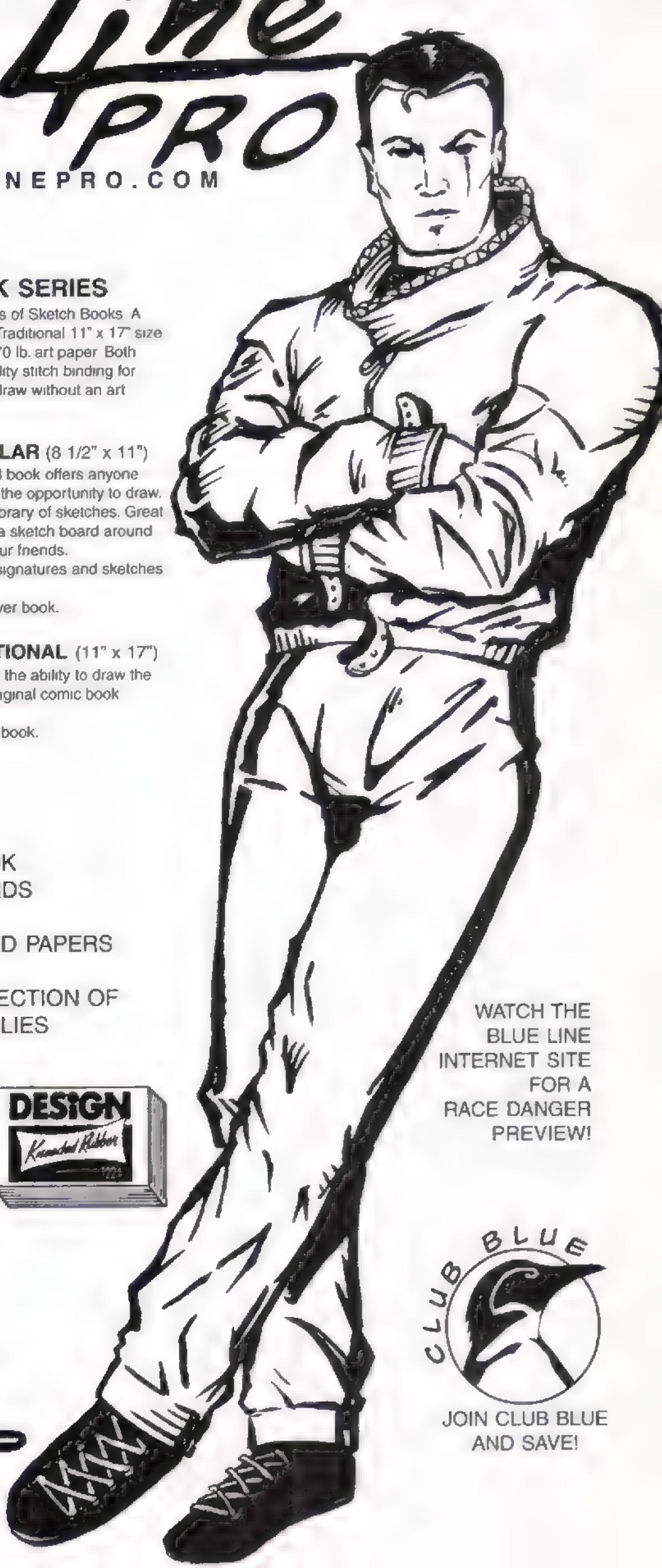
LARGE SELECTION OF  
ART SUPPLIES

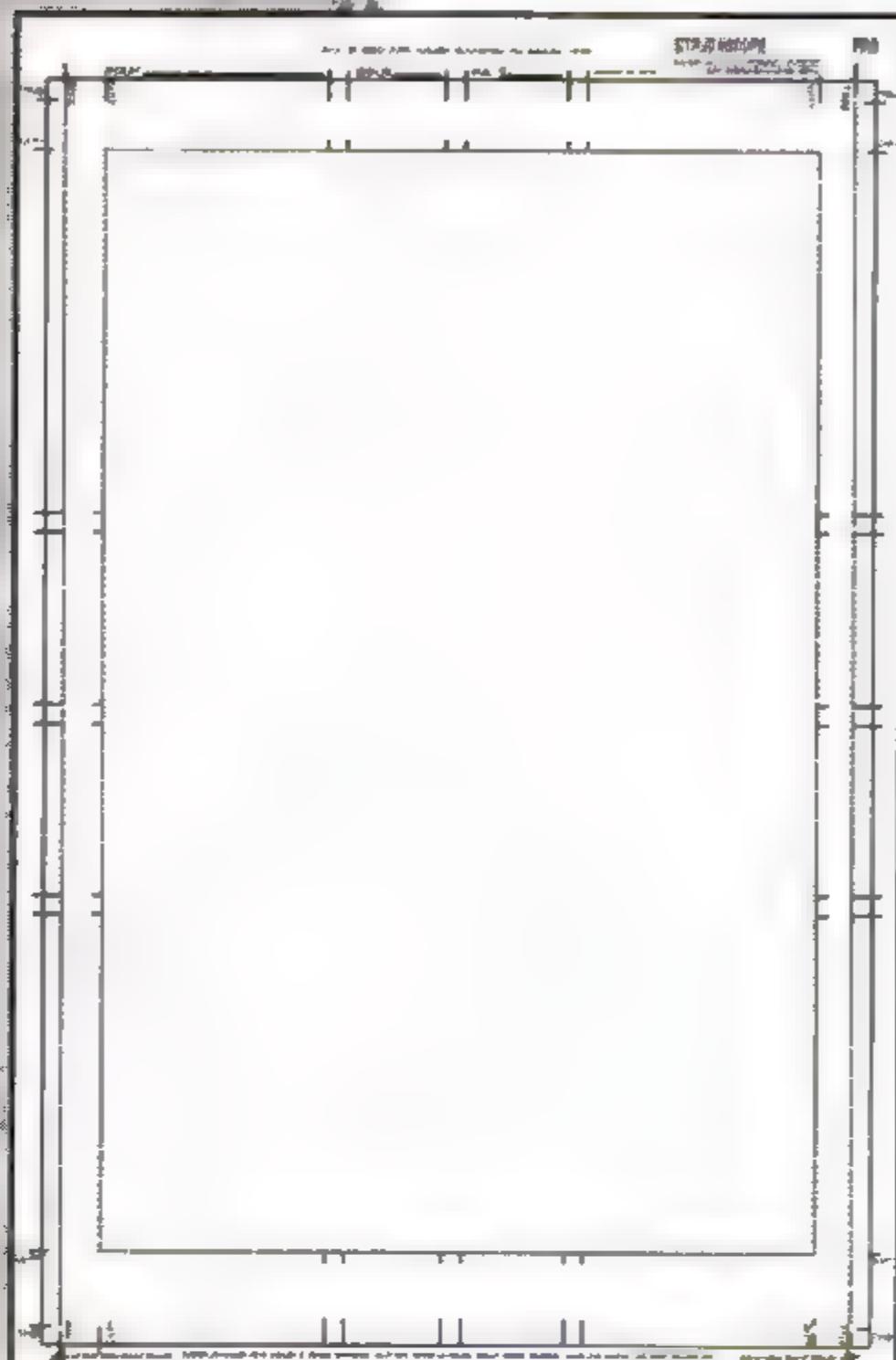


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**S400 Series (REGULAR)** toothy surface is a 100% acid free bristol. This Strathmore board works well with pencils, inks, charcoal and pastel.

12 pages per pack

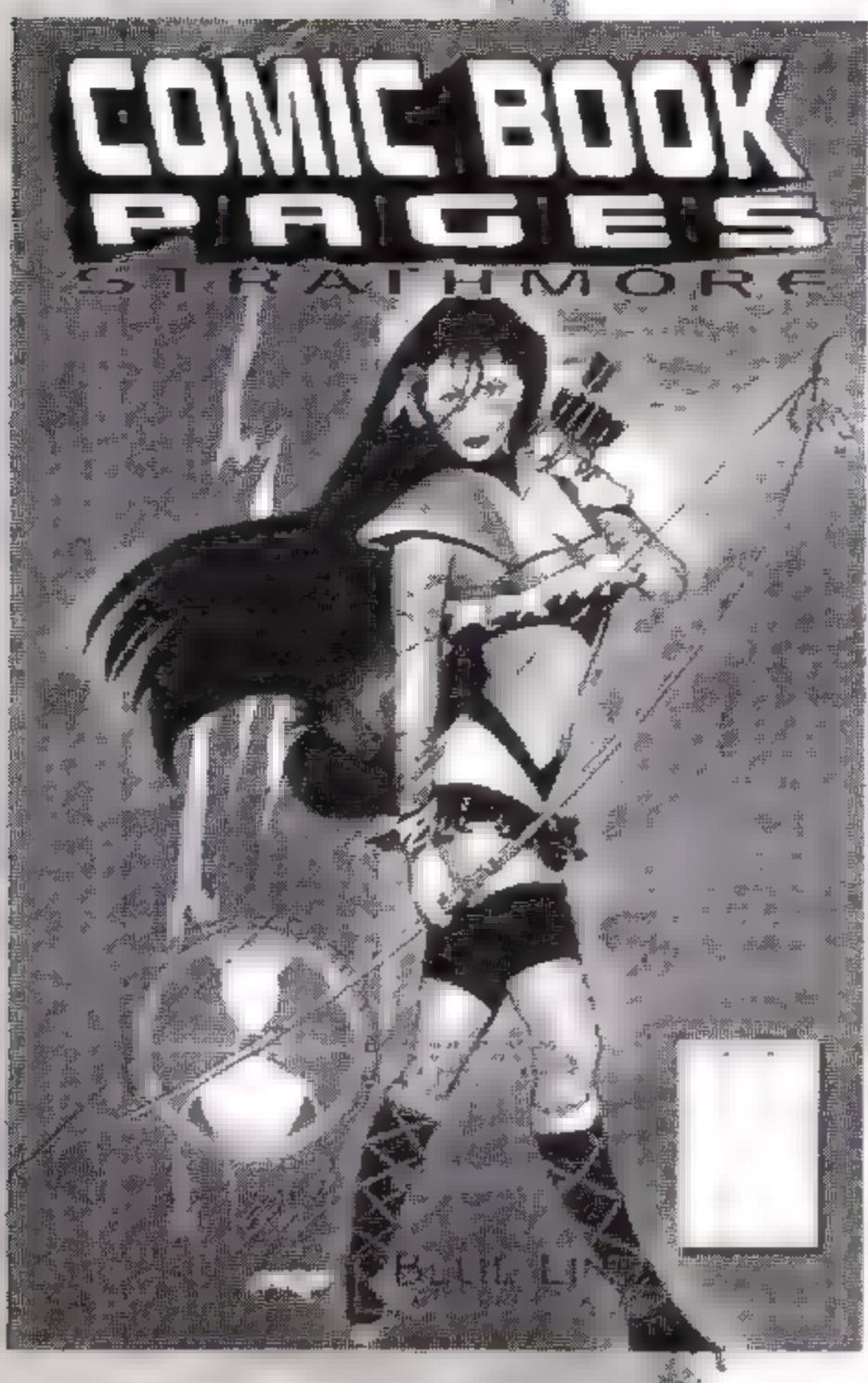
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged

**ITEM# BL1044 REGULAR 2-PLY SRP \$19.00**

**ITEM# BL1046 REGULAR 3-PLY SRP \$28.00**

**PLY:**

Ply is the thickness of the paper. A 2 ply paper has two pieces of paper pressed together and a 3 ply has 3 pieces of paper pressed together which is thicker than 2 ply.

**STRATHMORE****500 Series Full Trim Format**

500 series comic book boards is the top of the line for art paper. Strathmore 500 is 100% cotton fiber, Acid free and unsurpassed for fine pen and pencil work.

**500 Series (SMOOTH)** surface is a 100% cotton fiber acid free board. This Strathmore board is ideal for pen ink work and is also suited for pencil and marker.

12 pages per pack

11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged

**ITEM# BL1047 SMOOTH 2-PLY SRP \$41.00**

**ITEM# BL1049 SMOOTH 3-PLY SRP \$57.75**

**500 Series (REGULAR)** toothy surface is a 100% cotton fiber acid free board. This Strathmore board works well with pencils, charcoal and watercolor.

12 pages per pack

11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/ bagged

**ITEM# BL1048 REGULAR 2-PLY SRP \$41.00**

**ITEM# BL1050 REGULAR 3-PLY SRP \$57.75**

## COMIC BOOK BOARDS

## PRO COMIC BOOK BOARDS FULL TRIM FORMAT

Blue Line has taken the quality paper that they have used in the "Pro" pages for years and printed a newly designed Full Trim border format in non-photo blue ink.

This offering the artist the quality of Pro pages with an advanced page border.

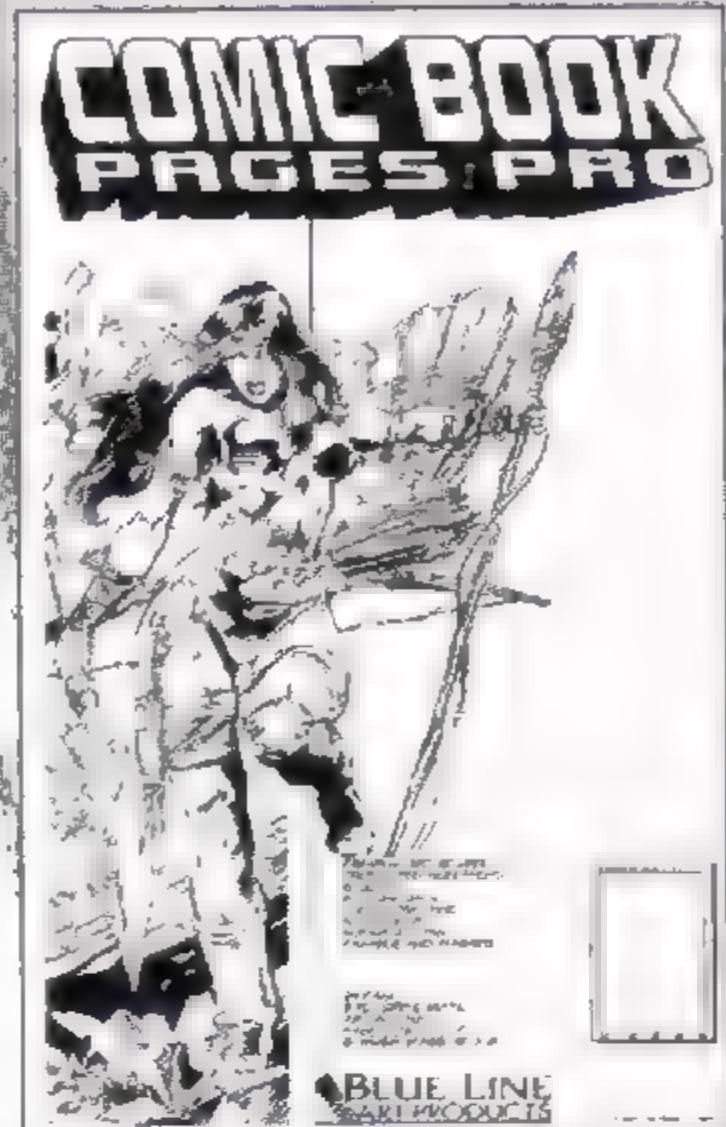
In addition, each pack also includes one page of Blue Line Comic Book Cover Sheets, specifically laid out with a larger image area for standard comic book cover designs.

Use pencil, ink (brush recommended), markers, wash, acrylics.

**ITEM# BL1038 SRP \$15.95**

24 pages per pack.

11" x 17" 3- ply brite art boards with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area and 1 Cover Sheet with 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo border printed/ bagged.



## PRO COMIC BOOK BOARDS TRADITIONAL FORMAT

Pro Comic Book Boards brite white surface offers a smooth surface to pencils and inking with a brush literally glides across the surface (quill pen not recommended). Pro has offered thousands of artist the opportunity to begin their careers on a pre-printed boards like the professional publisher uses.

Traditional Format has the original 10" x 15" image border with panel markers for a traditional page layout.

Page size is 11" x 17" with a non-photo blue image area of 10" x 15". In addition, each pack also includes one page of Blue Line Comic Book Cover Sheets, specifically laid out with a larger image area for standard comic book cover designs.

Use pencil, ink (brush recommended), markers, wash, acrylics.

**ITEM# BL1001 SRP \$15.95**

24 pages per pack.

11" x 17" 3- ply brite art boards with a 10" x 15" non-photo image printed and 1 Cover Sheet with 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo image printed/ bagged.

## COMIC BOOK BOARDS

## (Traditional Format)

Comic Book Boards are specifically laid out with an image area for standard comic book designs. These boards like the other comic book boards offer an area to write the name of the book the artist is drawing, issue number, page number and date. This helps to keep track of your boards and where they belong. Double page spreads are a snap for an artist. Just take two comic book boards and then butt the sides together, apply tape down the back of those boards and then the artist is ready to illustrate a double-page drawing. Fast and easy with no cutting. They are 24 pages of Brite Art Index. Page size is 11" x 17" with a non-photo blue image area of 10" x 15".

Use pencil, ink (brush), marker, wash.

**ITEM# BL1003 SRP \$12.95**

24 pages per pack.

11" x 17" pages with a 10" x 15" non-photo image/ bagged

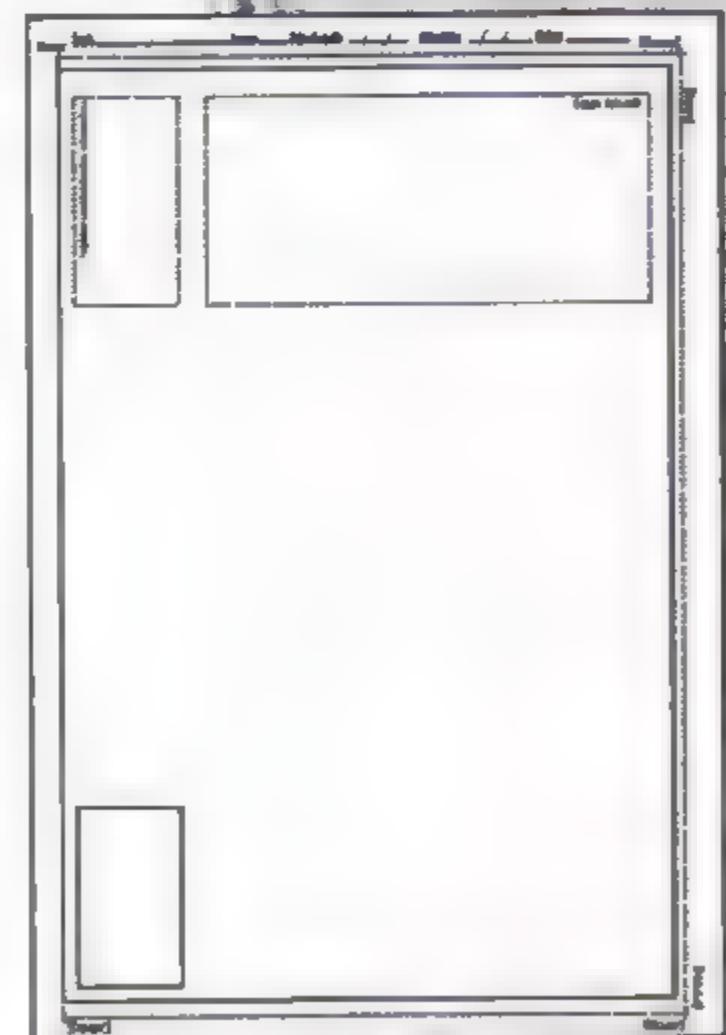
## COMIC BOOK COVER SHEETS

These Comic Book Cover Sheets, show a border for your drawing with pre-marked bleeds for trimming with an area for the possible placement for the book's logo and company information clearly marked. This helps to keep all of the important elements of the covers from being covered up when the book logo and company info are placed later. They are 12 pages of 2-ply premium Brite art index board that come bagged and feature non-photo blue ink. Page size is 11" x 17" with an image area of 10 3/4" x 16".

**ITEM# BL1007 SRP \$9.95**

12 pages per pack

11" x 17" art pages printed with a 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo blue border printed/ bagged.



Blue Line now offers comic artist an full trim comic book board to draw your comics. Just recently comic book publishers have been using full trim comic book boards to draw their comics. Blue Line has designed a full trim page that fits most requirements for full bleed comics, but can also be used to draw traditional comic book page formats. Special dotted borders helps the artist to keep the important illustrations within an area to be sure it's not lost to trimming.

## CUSTOMIZED ART PAPERS



### STORYBOARD TEMPLATES

Animators and Storyboard artist! Blue Line Storyboard Templates offers animators and writers a quick and easy way to show movement and sequences of a story or animation.

Storyboard Templates have three large panels with lines below each for detailed art and storytelling.

**ITEM# BL1018 SRP \$13.95**

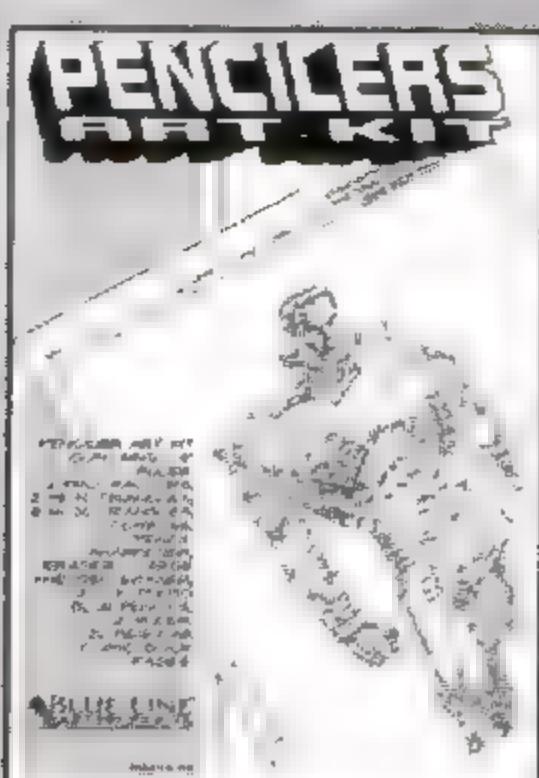
100 sheets of 60 lb. 8 1/2" x 14" pages with 3 panels padded with colored cover.

### CREATE YOUR OWN COMIC BOOK!

Blue Line has developed a simple and inexpensive step by step to create your very first comic book, that's fun, easy and comprehensive. A box set of Blue Line products that aid a person in making their own comic! It includes 1 Character Template, 6 Concept Sketch Pages, 6 Comic Book Layout Pages, 24 Comic Book Pages, 1 Comic Book Cover Sheet and a 24 page instructional comic book.

**ITEM# BL1002 SRP \$21.95**

Box Set 37 art pages / 24 page b&w instructional comic book / full color die cut box / shrink wrapped.



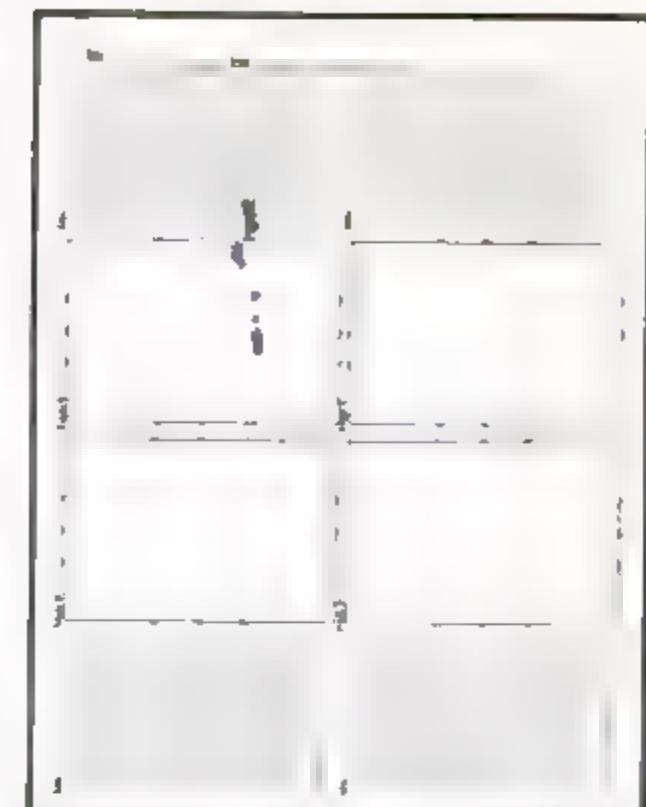
### LAYOUT PAGES

Comic Book Layout Pages uses premium bond paper and printed in non-photo blue, of course, features markings to layout four thumbnails per sheet to detail your comic book page ideas and room for notations and other information.

Used for story boarding your comic book story. A great tool for artists or writers to work out details for the story along with layouts of pages.

**ITEM# BL1005 SRP \$8.95**

30 8 1/2" x 11" pages printed in non-photo blue/ bagged.



### CONCEPT SKETCH PAGES

Record and organize your creative ideas on a convenient, quality art board. Concept Sketch Pages are made from premium index board featuring non-photo blue ink so that the artist can ink his illustrations on a non-repro surface. Concept Sketch Pages offer an image area for an illustrator to draw a character scene or anything. And, it also gives room for written information to be included with the artwork. This is handy when a character is designed for a comic book and you want to include his bio, powers, etc., or a Role Playing character you're playing. These pages can easily be hole punched and inserted into a binder. A character template is even included for quick and easy character creations!

**ITEM# BL1004 SRP \$8.95**

25 art pages printed in non-photo blue/ bagged.

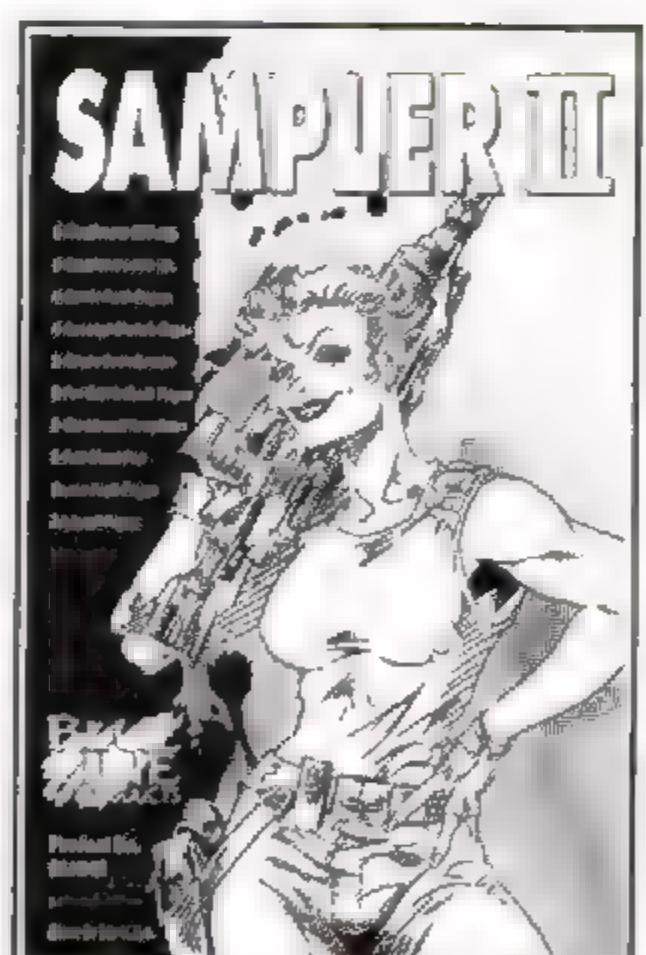


### BLUE LINE SAMPLER II

If you haven't tried Blue Line products, here's your chance! The Blue Line Sampler includes 4-Comic Book Pages, 4-Concept Sketch Pages, 3-Comic Book Cover Sheets, 3- Layout Pages, 3-Pro Comic Book Pages, 3-Storyboard Templates, 3-Full Bleed Pro C.B. Pages, 1-Strathmore 300 smooth, 1- Strathmore 300 regular. All in non-photo blue, of course! That's 25 pages of five different Blue Line products! Check out all Blue Line and Blue Line Pro products in one fell swoop!

**ITEM# BL1040 SRP \$13.95**

25 pages of 8 different Blue Line products. 4-Comic Book Pages, 4-Concept Sketch Pages, 3-Comic Book Cover Sheets, 3- Layout Pages, 3-Pro Comic Book Pages, 3-Storyboard Templates, 3-Full Bleed Pro C.B. Pages, 1-Strathmore 300 smooth, 1- Strathmore 300 regular. 25 pages per pack.



### PENCILER ART KIT

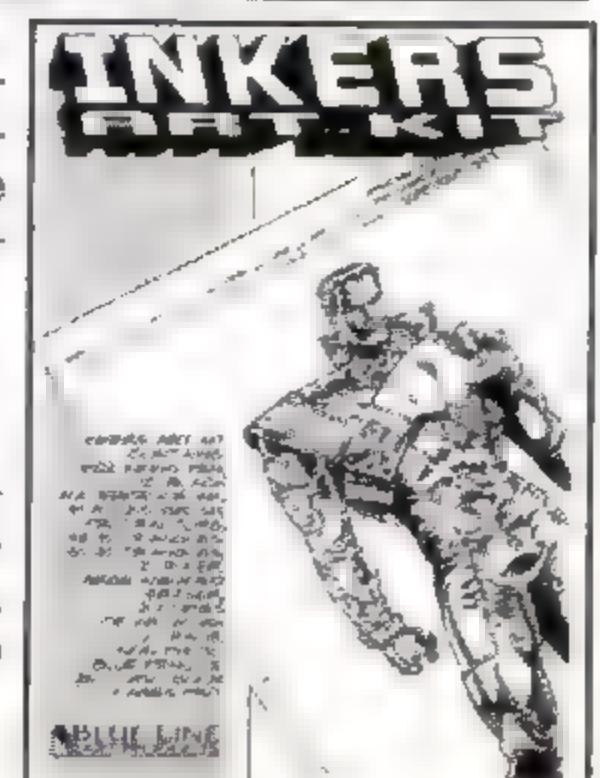
The Penciler art kit includes the following tools, papers and supplies: 1-6" Ruler, 2-Protractor, 2-45/90 Triangle, 2-60/30 Triangle, 1-Compass, 1-Pencil Sharpener, 1-Eraser, 1-Large Kneaded Eraser, 3-Non Photo Blue Pencils, 1-12" Ruler, 20-Regular Comic Book Pages with pre printed borders. Travel box.

**ITEM# BL1013 SRP \$29.95**

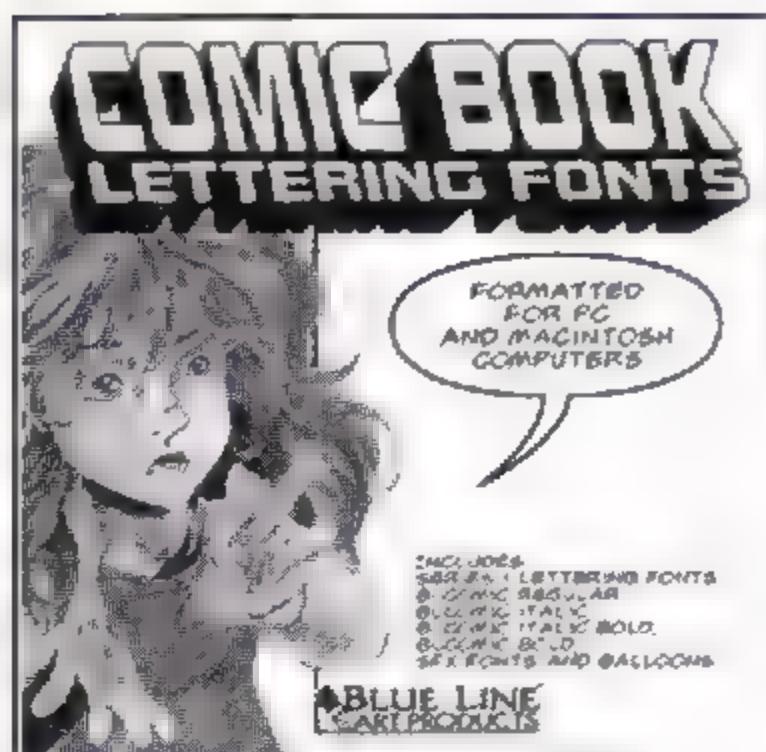
### INKER ART KIT

The Inker Art Kits includes the following tools, papers and supplies: 1-102 Inking Pen, 1-1 oz. Black Waterproof Ink, 1-#2 Round Brush, 1-Protractor, 1-45/90 Triangle, 1-60/30 Triangle, 1-12" Ruler, 1-Kneaded Eraser, 2-copies of artwork to light table, 20 Pro Comic Book Pages. 1-Non Photo Blue Pencil. Travel box.

**ITEM# BL1012 SRP \$34.95**



## SKETCH PAD. FONTS. WORK BOOK SERIES



## BLSFX FONT:

ARRCH! BZM WSH DOOM EEE YAH! FAWOOSH  
 GLUB HMM JINGL EEE MUNCH M  
 OUCH ZW! RUMBLE SPLASH TAP UGGH VA-ROOON  
 WHAM ZW! YAWN ZAP

## BLUE LINE COMIC BOOK LETTERING FONT SERIES 1

Blue Line now offers creators an inexpensive lettering font.

BLCOMIC font is formatted for Macintosh and PC Compatibles in a TruType format. BLSFX is a special effects font with pre-created sound effects that are ready for you to drop into place.

Also included is user configurable word balloons in .eps format.

**ITEM# BL1019 SRP \$19.95**

Includes: BLCOMIC font (Regular, Bold, Italic, Italic Bold), BLSFX font and configurable word balloons.

3 1/2 disk PC and Mac. format.

BLCOMIC FONT: ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
 1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
 1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
 1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
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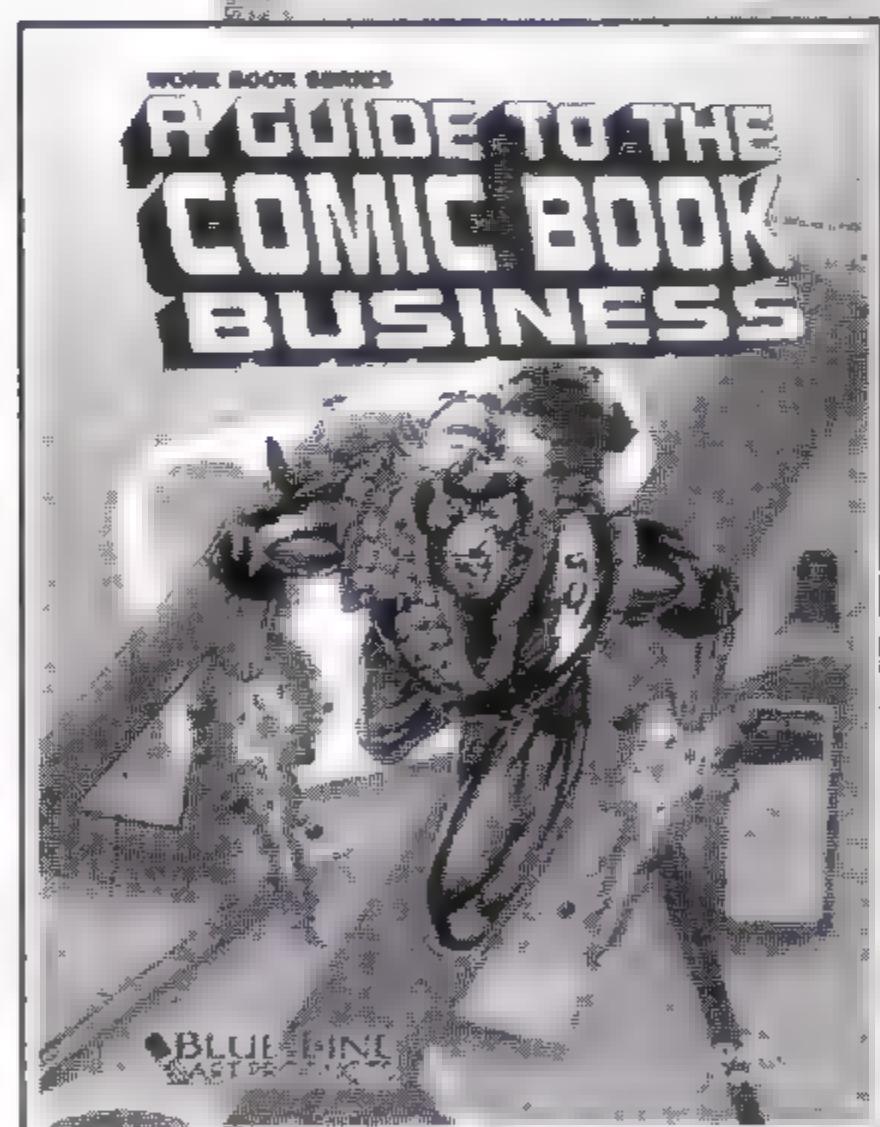
## BLUE LINE: A GUIDE TO THE COMIC BOOK BUSINESS

Every fan who reads comics has at one time or another felt the urge to join in on the fun, to take a more active role, to become a player instead of a spectator. In short, to create. You have the desire, now you need a plan.

That's where Blue Line's A Guide To The Comic Book Business comes in. It covers all of the basics for starting and maintaining a successful career in the comic book industry. It doesn't matter if your skills lie in penciling or management, this book tells you what to do to turn your hobby into a paid profession.

The first chapter gets you up-to-date on how the industry is set up. It gives you the basic information necessary to be a knowledgeable participant in the comics field. Now that you're seated, we serve the appetizers - how to go about creating your own comics. After you've digested this important info, it's time for the main course. You'll discover proven methods for making yourself an outstanding candidate. Then, we take a look at other jobs in the industry outside of the creative aspect for all of you wannabe corporate types. For a side dish, chapter five deals with that small but growing niche of the industry - the small press and self-publisher. Finally, dessert. We clue you in on effective ways to advertise and promote your work so that you can actually make money off of your talents.

So, for everyone who's ever dreamed of being on the other side of the table at a comic convention, doodled more in class notebooks than actually taking notes, this book is for you.



Forward by Beau Smith Executive Director of Publishing for McFarlane Productions

Written by Daniel Souder. Edited by Bob Hickey

**ITEM# BL1039 SRP \$17.95**

90 pages / b&w with full color cover. Spiral bound.



## POCKET SKETCH PAD

50 pages of heavy illustration board to carry around in your pocket to have ready when your hit with a revolutionary vision. Great for quick sketches and designs. Featuring Blue Line's quality illustration paper. Great for pencilling, inking and washes.

50 pages / 5" x 9 1/2" / padded / two-color cover

**Item # BL1051 SRP \$5.95**

## ART SUPPLIES

### INK

- AR-4415 Black Ink (Higgins) 1oz. **\$3.00**
- AR-EF44011 Black Magic Ink (Higgins) 1oz. **\$3.50**
- AR-PE211862 Black India Ink (Pelikan) 1oz. **\$4.75**
- AR-PE211169 Black India Ink (Pelikan) 8oz. **\$18.75**
- AR-PE221374 Black Ink Pelikan "T" 1oz **\$6.00**



### WHITE OUT

- AR-FW-011 FW Acrylic Artist Ink **\$5.00**



### BRUSHES

- AR-5007001 Winsor Newton Series 7 Size #1 **\$18.95**
- AR-5007002 Winsor Newton Series 7 Size #2 **\$22.95**
- AR-NB-38-0 Round Brush Size #0 **\$3.00**
- AR-NB-38-1 Round Brush Size #1 **\$3.25**
- AR-NB-38-2 Round Brush Size #2 **\$3.95**
- AR-056009016 Round Brush #3 **\$3.95**



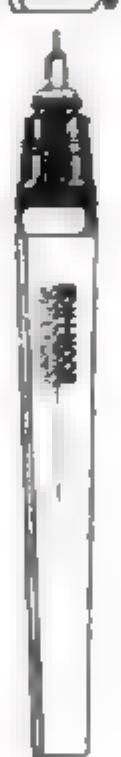
### PENCILS & QUILL PENS

- AR-761-5 Non-photo Blue Pencil **.60**
- AR-H9432 Quill Inking Pen #102 (Tip & Holder) **\$2.25**
- AR-H9402 12 Crow Quill #102 Tips (Inking Pen Nibs) **\$13.95**



### KOH-I-NOOR RAPIDOGRAPH PENS

- AR-3165-06/0 Tech Pen Size 6x0 (.13mm) **\$27.00**
- AR-3165-04/0 Tech Pen Size 4x0 (.18mm) **\$27.00**
- AR-3165-03/0 Tech Pen Size 3x0 (.25mm) **\$22.00**
- AR-3165-02/0 Tech Pen Size 2x0 (.3mm) **\$22.00**
- AR-3165-01/0 Tech Pen Size #0 (.35mm) **\$22.00**
- AR-3165-01 Tech Pen Size #1 (.5mm) **\$22.00**
- AR-3165-02 Tech Pen Size #2 (.6mm) **\$22.00**
- AR-3165-03 Tech Pen Size #3 (.8mm) **\$22.00**
- AR-3165-04 Tech Pen Size #4 (1mm) **\$22.00**
- AR-3165-06 Tech Pen Size #6 (.4mm) **\$22.00**
- AR-3165-07 Tech Pen Size #7 (.2mm) **\$22.00**



### KOH-I-NOOR RAPIGRAPH INK

- AR-3084-F1 Koh-I-Noor Ink **\$3.95**



### T-SQUARES

- AR-HX02 Plastic 12" **\$3.95**
- AR-NBA18 Plastic 18" **\$7.95**
- AR-NBA24 Plastic 24" **\$10.95**
- AR-FR63-112 Aluminum 12" **\$10.95**
- AR-FR63-118 Aluminum 18" **\$12.95**
- AR-FR63-124 Aluminum 24" **\$13.95**



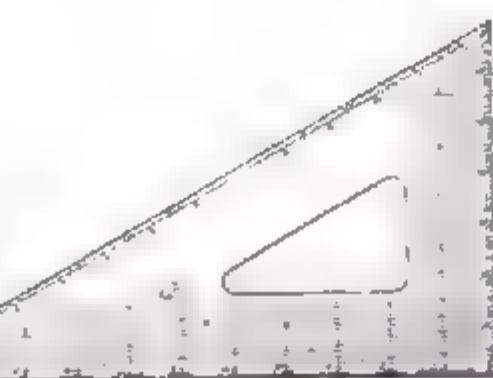
### RULERS

- AR-200-12 Steel Ruler 12 inch Cork Backing **\$5.95**
- AR-200-18 Steel Ruler 18 inch Cork Backing **\$6.95**
- AR-C36 Ruler 12" (plastic ruler) **\$1.25**



### TRIANGLES 30" x 60" W/ Inking Edge

- AR-1204-60 Triangle 30"x60" 4 inch **\$3.50**
- AR-1206-60 Triangle 30"x60" 6 inch **\$4.50**
- AR-1208-60 Triangle 30"x60" 8 inch **\$5.50**
- AR-1210-60 Triangle 30"x60" 10 inch **\$6.50**
- AR-1212-60 Triangle 30" 60" 12 inch **\$8.50**



### TRIANGLES 45" X 90" W/ Inking Edge

- AR-1204-45 Triangle 45"x90" 4 inch **\$4.50**
- AR-1206-45 Triangle 45"x90" 6 inch **\$5.50**
- AR-1208-45 Triangle 45"x90" 8 inch **\$7.50**
- AR-1210-45 Triangle 45"x90" 10 inch **\$9.50**
- AR-1212-45 Triangle 45" 90" 12 inch **\$11.50**

### COMPASS SET

- AR-HX18807 8-piece Geometry Set **\$4.95**
- AR-723405 8-Piece Geometry Set (brass compass) **\$7.95**

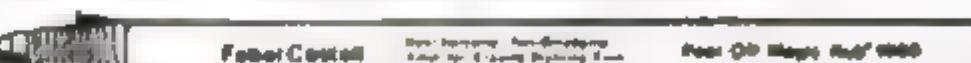


### CIRCLE TEMPLATES / FRENCH CURVES

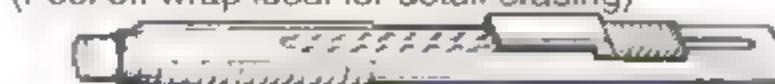
- AR-13001 Large Circles **\$7.95**
- AR-13011 Extra Large Circles **\$6.95**
- AR-9000 French Curves (Inking Edge) Set **\$6.95**
- AR-PK12691 Ellipse Temps. **\$12.00**

### ERASERS

- AR-1224 Kneaded Rubber Eraser Large **\$1.15**



- AR-400 Eraser Pencils **\$1.15**  
(Peel off wrap ideal for detail erasing)

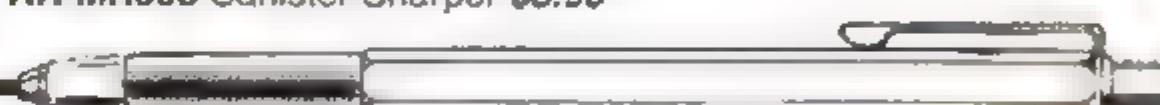


- AR-ZE-21C Pentel Clic Eraser/Holder **\$1.95**  
(retract as needed)
- AR-ZER-2 2 Pentel Refill Erasers **\$1.75**
- AR-FT-5370 Erasing Shield **\$1.10**



### PENCIL SHARPNER

- AR-MR906 Canister Sharper **\$3.95**



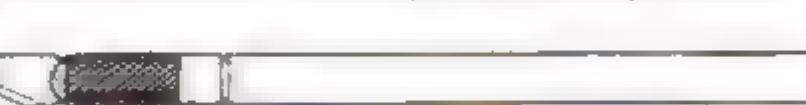
### MECHANICAL PENCIL

- AR-BP10C Pentel Mech Pencil 2 MM **\$6.95**
- AR-BP2375-HB 12-Pencil Leads- 0.2MM HB (Pentel) **\$10.50**
- AR-BP2375-2H 12-Pencil Leads- 0.2MM 2H (Pentel) **\$10.50**
- AR-BP2376-NPB 12-Non-Photo Blue Leads-2 MM **\$10.50**
- AR-BP14C Pencil Shapener (Mech Pencil) **\$10.75**



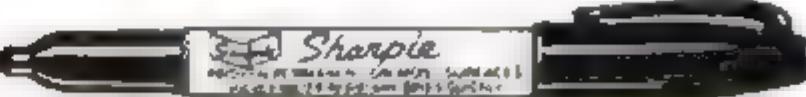
### PORTFOLIOS

- AR-FL419WH Portfolio (CLUB BLUE) **\$10.50**



### Misc.

- AR-FT5391 Draftsman Brush (cleaning paper) **\$6.00**
- AR-XA3626 Xacto Knife **\$5.25**
- AR-OLKB Xacto Refill Blades #1 **\$6.50**
- AR-KR1306 Workable Fixatif (Krylon) **\$8.95**
- AR-BT138 Rubber Cement 4oz. **\$3.50**
- AR-BT102 Rubber Cement Quart **\$13.235**
- AR-BT201 Rubber Cement Thinner Pint **\$8.50**
- AR-BT700 Rubber Cement Pick-Up (eraser) **\$1.50**



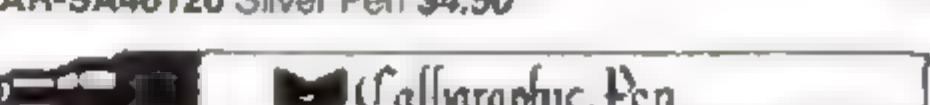
### SHARPIE MARKERS

- AR-SA37101 Ultra Fine Black **\$1.30**
- AR-SA35101 Extra Fine Black **\$1.30**
- AR-SA30101 Regular Black **\$1.30**
- AR-SA33101 Super Sharpie **\$1.30**



### METALLIC PENS for Autographs

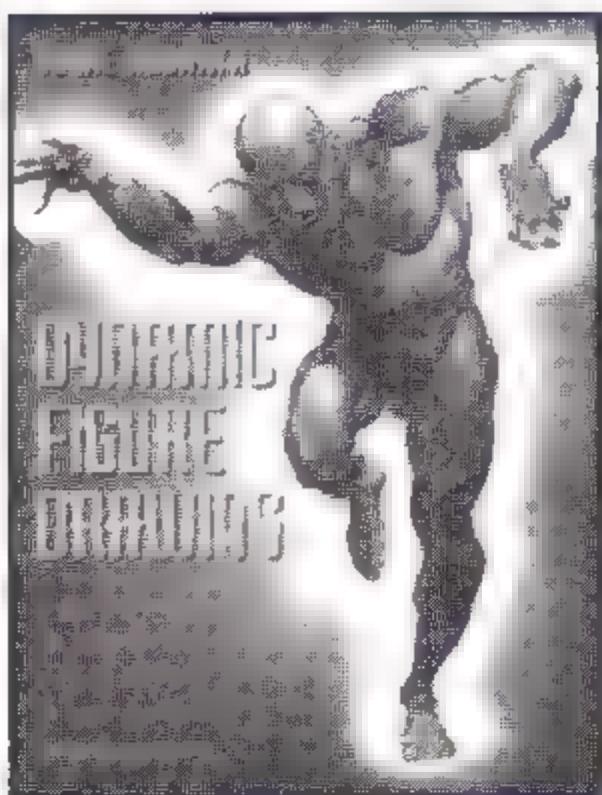
- AR-SA46115 Gold Pen **\$4.50**
- AR-SA46120 Silver Pen **\$4.50**



### COMIC BOOK ORIGINAL ART BAGS

- 11 1/2" x 19" Polyethylene (3.0 mil)
- AR-BAG 1119-25 25 Bags **\$7.50**
- AR-BAG 1119-100 100 Bag **\$25.00**

## ART BOOKS

**DYNAMIC FIGURE DRAWING**

By Burne Hogarth

Figure drawing is the most essential - and the most difficult - of all skills for the artist to learn. The hardest problem is to visualize the figure in the tremendous variety of poses which the body takes in action, poses which plunge the various forms of the body into deep space and show them in radical foreshortening.

**ITEM# AB1001 SRP \$23.00**

176 pages. 8 1/2 x 11. Hundreds of drawings and diagrams.

**DYNAMIC ANATOMY**

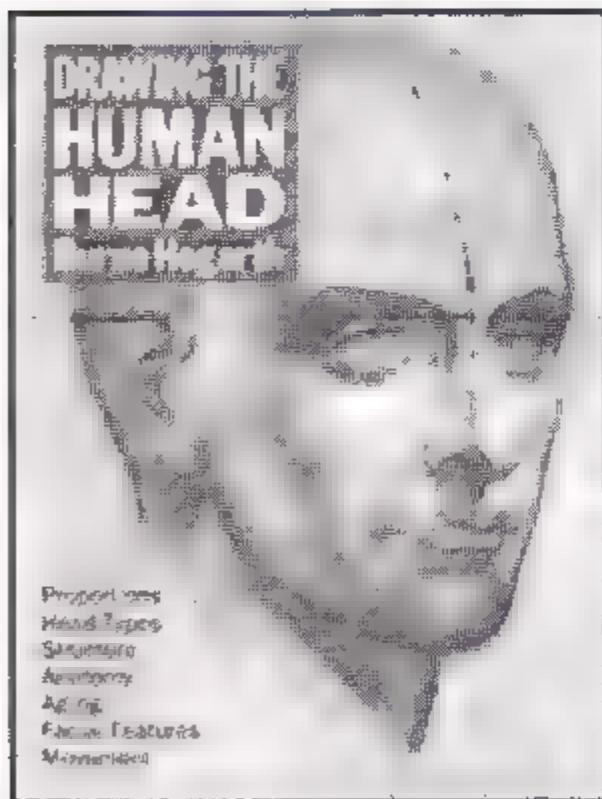
By Burne Hogarth

Dynamic Anatomy presents a unique, detailed study of the human figure as artistic anatomy.

By emphasizing the relationship of mass to movement and thus going far beyond the factual elements of anatomy, this fascinating book affords the reader sound practical methods for drawing human forms that come alive.

**ITEM# AB1002 SRP \$22.25**

232 pages. 8 1/2 x 11. Over 300 two color drawings and diagrams. Bibliography Index.

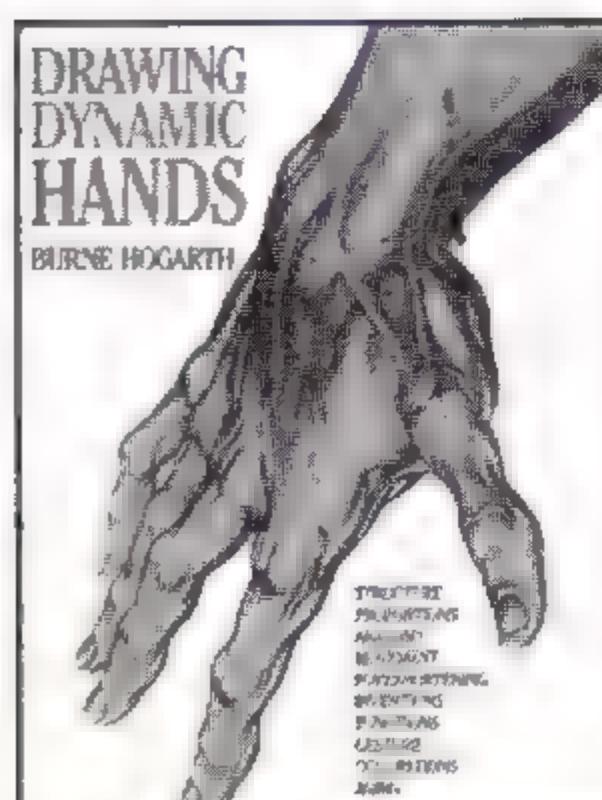
**DRAWING THE HUMAN HEAD**

By Burne Hogarth

Drawing the Human Head represents a landmark in art instruction books. A comprehensive work on the human head, this outstanding handbook is so unique in concept and approach that no artist's library will be complete without it.

**ITEM# AB1003 SRP \$19.75**

160 pages. 8 1/2 x 11. Over 300 black and white illustrations.

**DRAWING DYNAMIC HANDS**

By Burne Hogarth

Drawing Dynamic Hands is one of the most challenging skills required of the artist who draws the human figure. Here, Burne Hogarth, master of the human form, presents the most comprehensive book ever published on drawing human hands.

**ITEM# AB1004 SRP \$19.75**

144 pages. 8 1/4 x 11. Over 300 black and white illustrations.

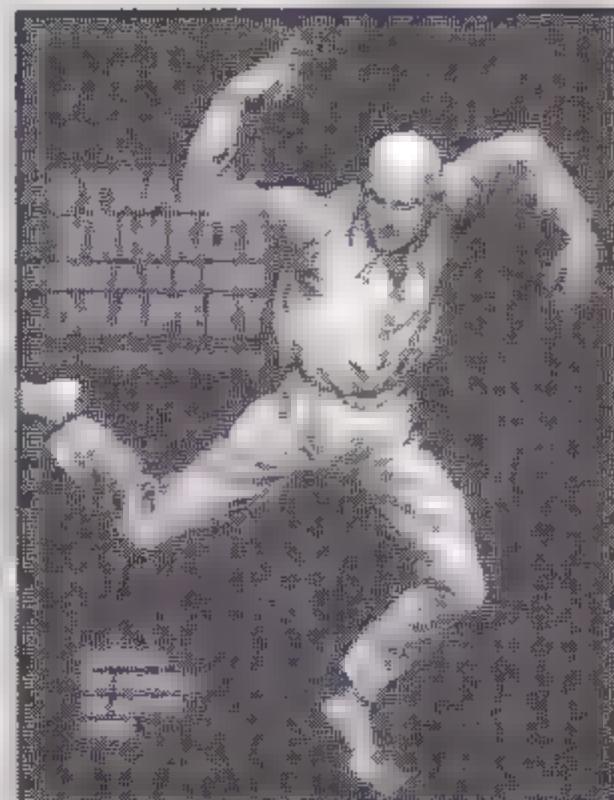
**DYNAMIC WRINKLES AND DRAPERY**

By Burne Hogarth

Through a series of extraordinary drawings and diagrams, Mr. Hogarth, famous for his wrinkles, folds, and drapery. His basic idea is that an accurate rendering of wrinkle patterns depends on understanding how the actions of a figure provoke any material.

**ITEM# AB1005 SRP \$26.00**

144 pages. 8 1/4 x 11. over 150 two-color illustrations.

**DYNAMIC LIGHT AND SHADE**

By Burne Hogarth

Mastery of light and shade-rendered with accuracy and expressive power-is the key to three-dimensional form in drawing and painting.

Hogarth begins with the simplest kind of light and shade, showing how a dark silhouette on white paper can communicate form and space. He then shows how the silhouette is transformed into three dimensions with the addition of minimal light-the highlight.

**ITEM# AB1006 SRP \$19.75**

160 pages. 8 1/4 x 11. 224 black and white illustrations.

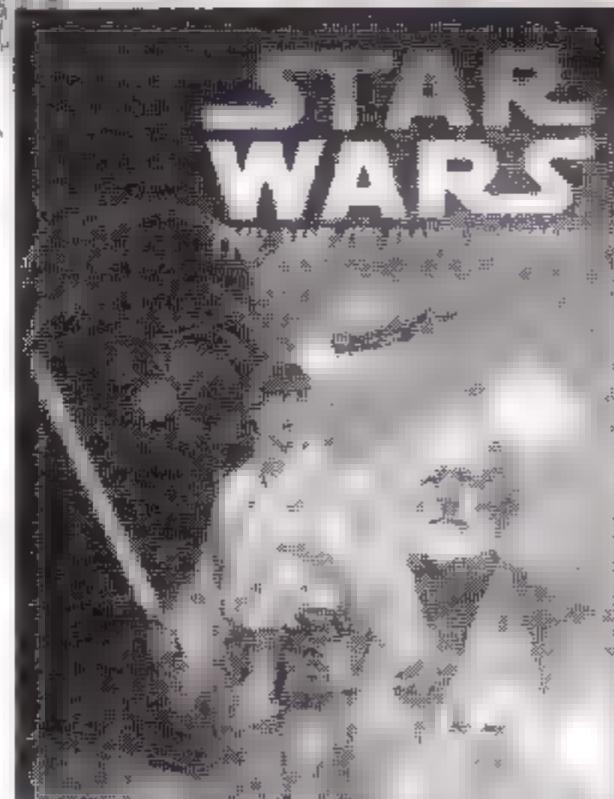
**STAR WARS THE ART OF DAVE DORMAN**

by Dave Dorman and Lurene Haines

One of the most outstanding illustrator to come along in the past decade. Dave Dorman has made his mark on the Star Wars saga. This book offers the most complete volume of Dave's Star Wars illustrations. Packed with paints, sketches and a very detailed how-to from original design to completed painting of this book's cover.

**ITEM# AB1007 SRP \$29.25**

128 pages. 9 x 11. Over 150 paintings, sketches and photos.

**THE ART OF COMIC BOOK INKING**

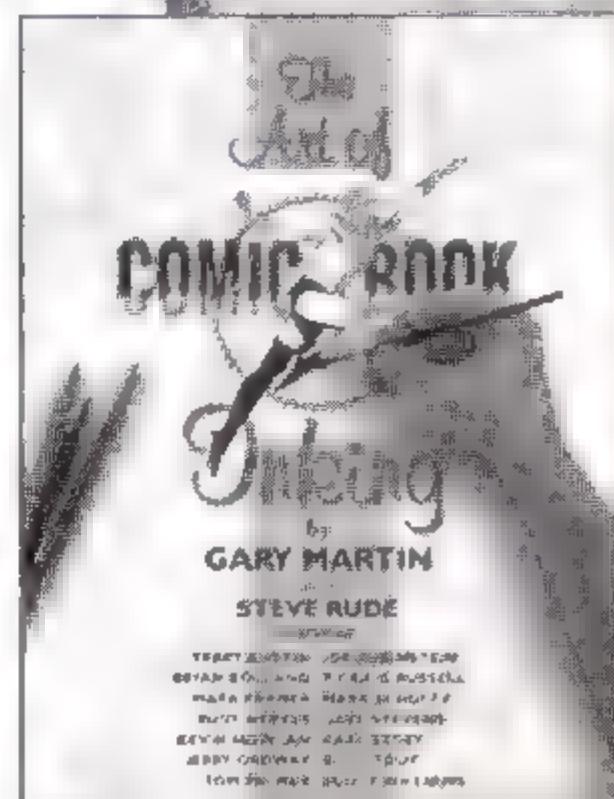
by Gary Martin with Steve Rude

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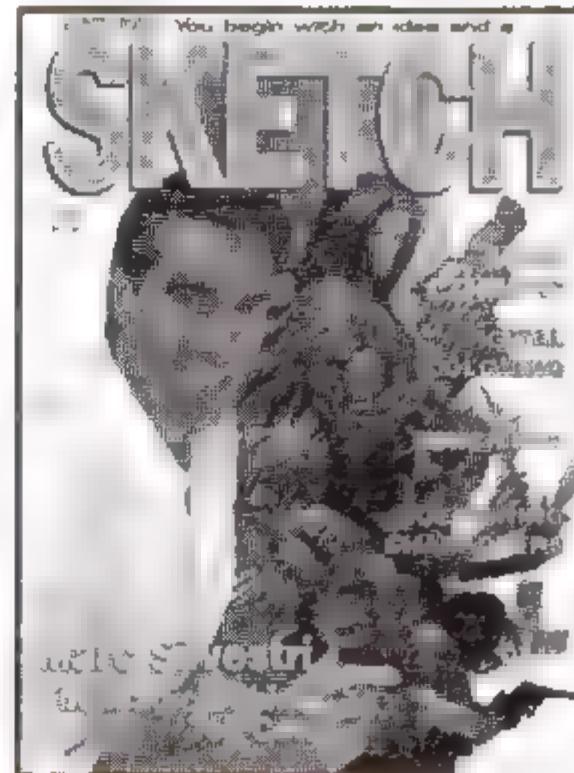
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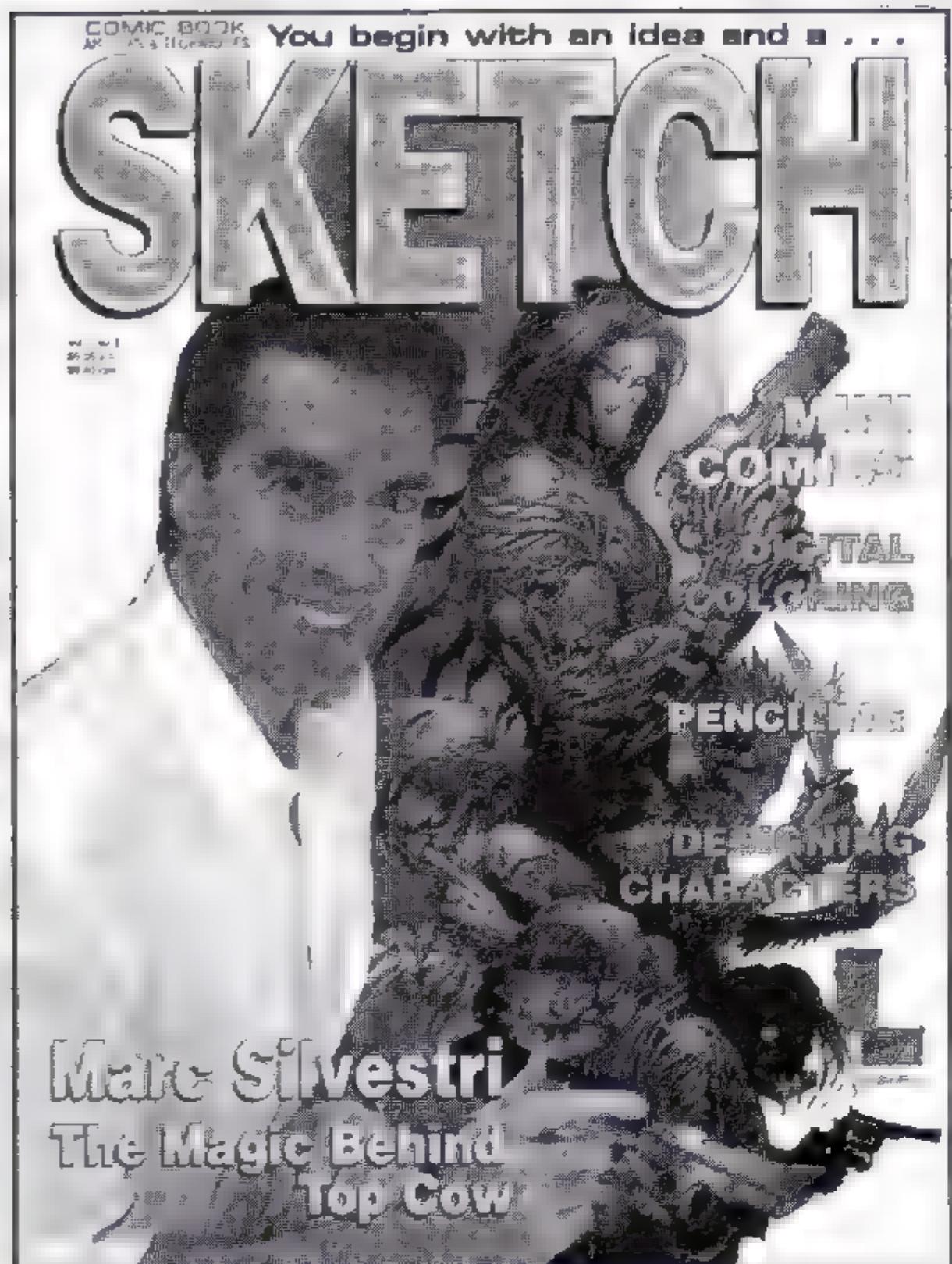
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#### Big Easy Comic-Con

May 26-28, 2000 New Orleans, LA Organized by Contact: R.A.P. Productions PO Box 3831, Mansfield OH 44907-1427, Roger Price Ph. (419) 526-1427 Fax (603) 250-9252, Email [BIGEASYCON@WFCOMICS.COM](mailto:BIGEASYCON@WFCOMICS.COM) Website [WWW.BIGEASYCON.COM](http://WWW.BIGEASYCON.COM)

#### Canadian National Comic Book Expo

August 25-27, 2000, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre Contact: Aman Gupta 4 Varsity Rd., Toronto, Ontario M6S 4N4 CANADA, Ph. (416) 761-1760, E-mail [AGUPTA@HOBBYSTAR.COM](mailto:AGUPTA@HOBBYSTAR.COM), Website [WWW.HOBBYSTAR.COM/COMICEXPO](http://WWW.HOBBYSTAR.COM/COMICEXPO)

#### San Diego Comic Con International

July 22-23, 2000 at the San Diego Convention Center, San Diego CA Contact: Fae Desmond Comic-Con International PO Box 128458, San Diego CA 92112-8458 Ph (619) 544-9555 Fax (619) 544-0743, E-mail [CCIWEB@AOL.COM](mailto:CCIWEB@AOL.COM) Website [WWW.COMIC-CON.ORG](http://WWW.COMIC-CON.ORG)

#### Dragon Con

June 29-July 2 at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, GA Contact: Ed Kramer, PO Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362-0696, Ph. (770) 925-0115 Fax (770) 623-6321, E-mail [EDKRAMER@AOL.COM](mailto:EDKRAMER@AOL.COM), Website [WWW.DRAGONCON.ORG](http://WWW.DRAGONCON.ORG)

#### Heroes Convention

June 16-18, 2000 at the Charlotte Convention Center Contact: Shelton Drum, Heroes Convention 2000 PO Box 9181, Charlotte NC 28299, Ph (704) 375-7463, Fax (704) 375-7464, Website [WWW.HEROESONLINE.COM](http://WWW.HEROESONLINE.COM)

#### Mega Con

March 2000 at Orlando FL Contact: Beth Widera, Mega Con 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400 Oldsmar FL 34677, Ph (813) 891-1702, Fax. (813) 891-0542, E-mail [MEGACON2000@MEGACONVENTION.COM](mailto:MEGACON2000@MEGACONVENTION.COM) Website [WWW.MEGAVENTION.COM](http://WWW.MEGAVENTION.COM)



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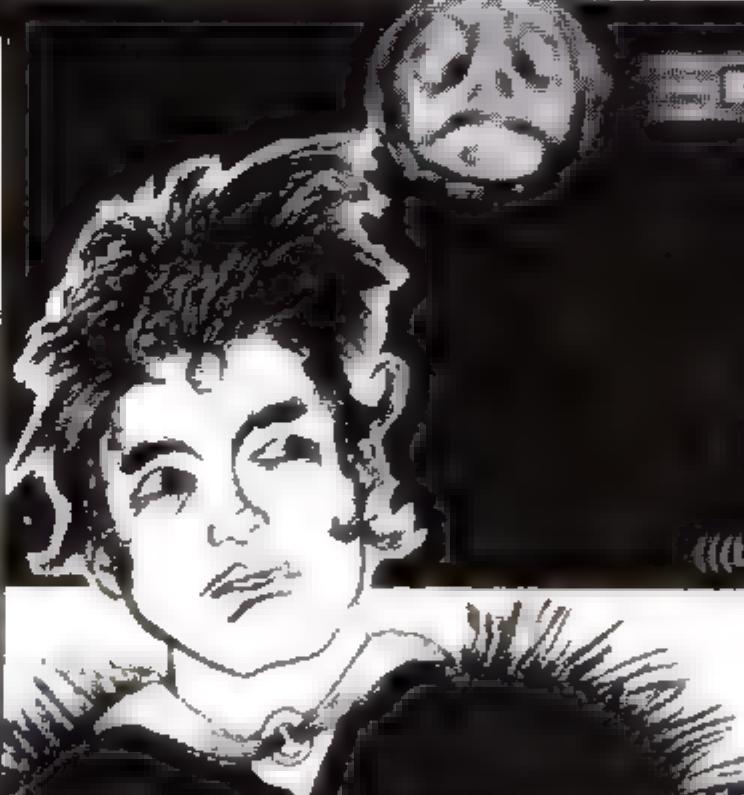
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#### Minnesota Comic Book Convention

MCBA Microcon April 30, 2000 and MCBA Falcon Sept 16-17, 2000 in Bloomington, Minn Contact Nick or Brian 5013 Gralton Ave N, Oakdale, MN 55128, Ph. (612) 788-8191, Fax. (851) 228-3013, E-mail [MNCBA@AOL.COM](mailto:MNCBA@AOL.COM)

#### Motor City Conventions, Inc.

Chicago Comiquest March 4-5 at Ramada Plaza Hotel O'Hara IL Motor City Comic Con May 19-21 at Novi Expo Center, Novi, MI Contact Gary Bishop 19785 W 12 Mile Rd., Suite 231 Southfield MI 48076, Ph (248) 426-8059, Fax (248) 426-8064.

#### Wizard World Chicago 2000

August 4, 5-6 at the Rosemont Expo Center in suburban Chicago Contact Brenda Cook 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920, ph (914) 268-8068, fax (914) 268-8069, Website [WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM](http://WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM)

#### WonderCon

April 7-9 2000 at the Oakland Convention Center San Francisco Bay Area CA Contact Joe Field 2991 Shattuck Ave #202, Berkeley CA 94705, Ph (925) 825-5410 Fax (925) 825-5412 Website [WWW.WONDERCON.COM](http://WWW.WONDERCON.COM)

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**LOOKING FOR** artist to pencil and ink science fiction graphic novel. Concept similar to Space: Above & Beyond. Style: Marc Silvestri. Tsunami Media Publications 12440 S. W. 107th Avenue, Miami FL 33176 [sohei@earthlink.net](mailto:sohei@earthlink.net)

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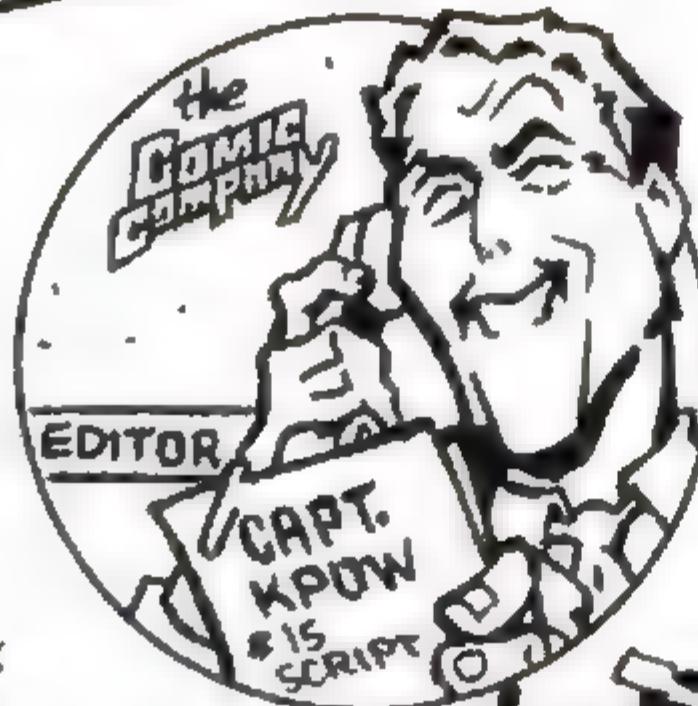
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# COVER STORY

IT'S YOUR  
FIRST TIME  
~ SO DO IT  
GENTLY



DON'T HESITATE TO ASK AS MANY QUESTIONS AS NECESSARY TO GET AS MUCH CLEAR INPUT/DIRECTION FROM THE EDITOR AS YOU NEED - THIS WILL SAVE YOU THE POSSIBILITY OF LOSING VALUABLE TIME AT A LATER, CRITICAL POINT! ARGH! AND, SPEAKING OF TIME... YOU'RE A PROFESSIONAL (I'VE BEEN KNOWN TO IMITATE ONE), SO YOU HAVE - IMMEDIATELY - THE INTERNAL CONFLICT OF THE COMMERCIAL ILLUSTRATOR TO FACE:

THIS IS NOT ANOTHER "HOW-TO-DRAW" ARTICLE. THIS IS ABOUT THE PROCESS OF CREATION (WHICH JUST HAPPENS TO INVOLVE... A COVER) IN THE COMIC BOOK REAL WORLD: THESE BASICS SHOULD HELP YOU TRAVERSE THE BUMPY PATH OF A PROFESSIONAL COMIC ARTIST, DEVELOP A PERSONAL APPROACH, AND STIMULATE SOME CREATIVITY.

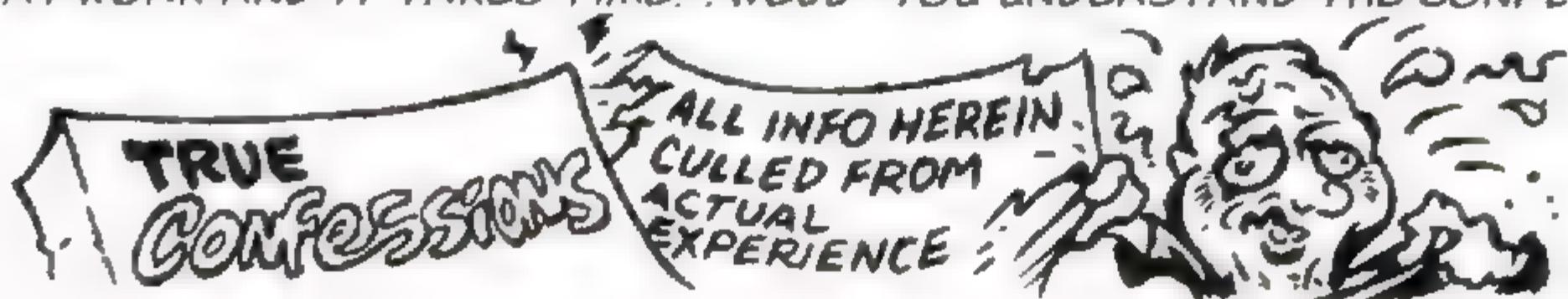
SO! YOUR ENDLESS PERSISTENCE, HARD WORK AND SELF PROMOTION (NOT TO MENTION YOUR SCARY DRAWING TALENT) HAS PAID OFF - YOU'VE LANDED A COVER, ARGUABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE BOOK COVERS ARE UNIQUE TASKS WITH UNIQUE CHALLENGES. YOUR EDITOR MAY GIVE YOU THE ASSIGNMENT IN A VARIETY OF FORMS: A SPRINGBOARD OR PLOT, A FULL SCRIPT - MAYBE A FRESH IDEA THAT COMES UP IN CASUAL CONVERSATION. YOU MIGHT EVEN BE ASKED TO WORK FROM A THUMBNAIL OR ROUGH FROM THE ART DIRECTOR.



COVERS - THERE ARE THOSE THAT LOVE TO ENDLESSLY FINESSE, THERE ARE THOSE THAT GET THE JOB DONE IMMEDIATELY AND COLLECT THE CHECK: THERE ARE SUCCESSES IN EITHER DISCIPLINE, BUT CHOICE OF PATH (AND RESULTANT WORK ETHIC AND CONSEQUENCE) IS YOURS TO DECIDE. HOPEFULLY YOU'LL FIND A HAPPY MEDIUM THAT SATISFIES THE BIG THREE:



BEING ON TIME IS AS (OFTEN MORE SO) IMPORTANT AS THE QUALITY OF WORK YOU PRODUCE. UNLESS YOU'RE ONE OF THE RARE COMIC GODS (EVEN DEMIGODS), THE ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE MASTERPIECE YOU DELIVER VERY LATE WILL OFTEN COST YOU ANOTHER ASSIGNMENT. ALSO, YOU'RE PART OF A TEAM - COMIC PRODUCTION HAS A DOMINO EFFECT AND EVERYONE HAS DEADLINE PRESSURE, NOT JUST YOU, PICASSO. BUT... I WANNA DO GREAT WORK AND IT TAKES TIME? WELL - YOU UNDERSTAND THE CONFLICT.



COVERS SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO SELL - THEY WANT TO SCREAM "BUY ME!". SO LET'S UNDERSTAND WHAT/HOW YOU'RE SELLING. CONSUMERISM HAS BEEN CHANGED SOMEWHAT BY THE INTERNET, BUT FOR THE TRUE COMIC EXPERIENCE THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A TRIP TO THE STORE ON NEW BOOK DAY!

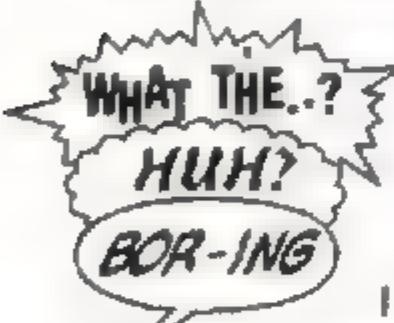


THERE ARE NUMEROUS, UNIQUE TYPES OF COMIC BOOK PURCHASERS. SOME WILL ALREADY WANT YOUR ASSIGNED ISSUE BECAUSE THEY LOVE THE CHARACTER, THE WRITER, ETC. THEY ARE AN ESTABLISHED BASE, BUT - YOIKS! THERE ARE DOZENS OF BOOKS ON THE RACK, IT'S DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE LOOKING FOR YOU TO FIND YOU (JUST LIKE BEING AT THE AIRPORT)! CAN YOU ATTRACT THEM - EVEN GO ON TO ACHIEVE THE MUCH DESIRED 'BUY THIS ISSUE FOR THE COVER ONLY' SALE?! THIS, OF COURSE IS WONDERFUL FOR YOU AS AN ARTIST - THERE NOTHING LIKE SELLING A BOOK SOLELY ON THE STRENGTH OF IT'S COVER!



ON THAT SINGLE-ISSUE HOOK, THE HOPE IS THIS ART LOVER WILL BECOME A NEW REGULAR FAN/BUYER OF A TITLE THEY MIGHT NEVER HAVE SAMPLED - IF NOT FOR YOUR WORK

DO A LITTLE HOMEWORK. FAMILIARIZE, OR REFRESH YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHARACTER (CAUTION REMEMBER THE TIME FACTOR - BE REALISTIC). LOOK OVER SOME BACK ISSUES, AN ASPIRING MOVIE, OR (...IS...ANYONE...AROUND)... PLAY WITH YOUR ACTION FIGURES!!



I HEAR YOU! 2 PAGES IN - WHEN ARE WE GONNA DRAW, FOR THE LUVVA..?!! -HMPH! - WELL, IN ALL HONESTY, SOME ARTISTS WILL HAVE FINISHED THEIR COVER BEFORE YOU FINISHED THE FIRST PAGE OF THIS ARTICLE! IT ALL GOES BACK TO 'THE BIG QUESTION' (UNLESS YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE RARE ARTISTS POSSESSING THE SPEED OF THE FLASH). TIME, DEADLINES, FINANCES, PERSONAL PROBLEMS AND OTHER VERY REAL (POSSIBLY UNPLEASANT) FACTORS/CONSTRAINTS MOTIVATE/WEIGH ON YOUR COVER PROCESS. ARGH! ARGH AGAIN!



YOU MAY GET QUEASY IF YOU LOOK IN A MIRROR LATER, BUT RIGHT NOW DO WHAT IT TAKES - FEED YOUR BRAIN MUNCHIES (ON THE FUN, 'CAUSE YOU'VE GOT WORK TO DO)! BUT THIS WILL HELP YOU IMPORTANTLY - UNDERSTAND AND DEVELOP YOUR OWN PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY ON THE CHARACTER AND IT'S 'UNIVERSE'.

BUT STUFF LIKE THIS - THINGS THAT HELP YOU INFUSE YOUR PRODUCT WITH YOUR OWN 'CREATIVE BLOOD TYPE' - GIVES YOU SPECIAL VALUE AS A CREATOR, AN ARTIST. HOWEVER, REALITY - YOUR EDITOR, YOUR PERSONAL WORK ETHIC, ETC. - WILL SET THE PACE. HAVING STRESSED THIS - **LET'S GET DRAWING!!!** ...WHAT THE HECK HAVE YOU BEEN DOING ANYHOW?

YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN A COVER, SO THE ASSUMPTION YOU'RE AN IMPRESSIVE DRAFTSMAN KNOWLEDGEABLE IN SOLID DRAWING FOUNDATIONS IS A SAFE ONE. MAKE SURE YOU'RE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF YOUR PRODUCTION PARAMETERS AS WELL.



CHECK FOR THINGS LIKE TRIMMING, BLEEDS, AND DEAD AREA SIZE (DEAD AREA IS WHERE THINGS LIKE THE COMPANY LOGO, PRICING AND BOOK TITLE ARE PLACED). ALSO, YOU MAY WANT TO BE AWARE OF COVER BLURBS, BALLOONS OR ADDITIONAL SPECIAL TYPE MIGHT BE BROUGHT INTO PLAY. OBVIOUSLY, YOU DON'T WANT IMPORTANT ELEMENTS (TYPE OR GRAPHIC) TO OVERLAP WITHOUT SOME SPECIFIC DESIGN INTENT. KEEP IN MIND THE RELATIVELY SMALL 'LIVE' IMAGE AREA - GENERALLY ABOUT 2/3 THE COVER FOR YOUR ILLUSTRATION.

**ROUGH GOING**  
HERE'S WHERE YOU MAKE CERTAIN YOU UNDERSTAND DIRECTIONS, WHAT YOU'RE SOLICITING, AND THE WISHES OF YOUR EDITOR. DESIRED IMAGERY IS NOT ALWAYS CONVEYED VERBALLY; IT'S TIME TO FINALIZE ALL IDEAS AND OPINIONS - IT'S TIME FOR ROUGHS! ROUGHS ARE MORE COMPLETE THUMBNAILS, SIMPLE LAYOUTS WHERE YOU ACTUALLY COMPOSE THE COVER AND ALLOW EVERYONE NECESSARY TO HAVE INPUT, MAKE CHANGES, ETC. UNTIL A FINAL VERSION IS DECIDED UPON AND YOU CAN PROCEED WITH THE ACTUAL COVER ART.

HEY - HOW ABOUT THOSE COVERS? AFTER THAT PRECIOUS EXAMINATION YOU'VE PROBABLY FIGURED OUT THERE ARE TWO BASIC COVER TYPES!

1

THE 'INSIDE' COVER - YOUR ILLUSTRATION DELINEATES SOME NARRATIVE ASPECT OF THE ISSUE'S ACTUAL CONTENT, AN 'EXCERPT'.

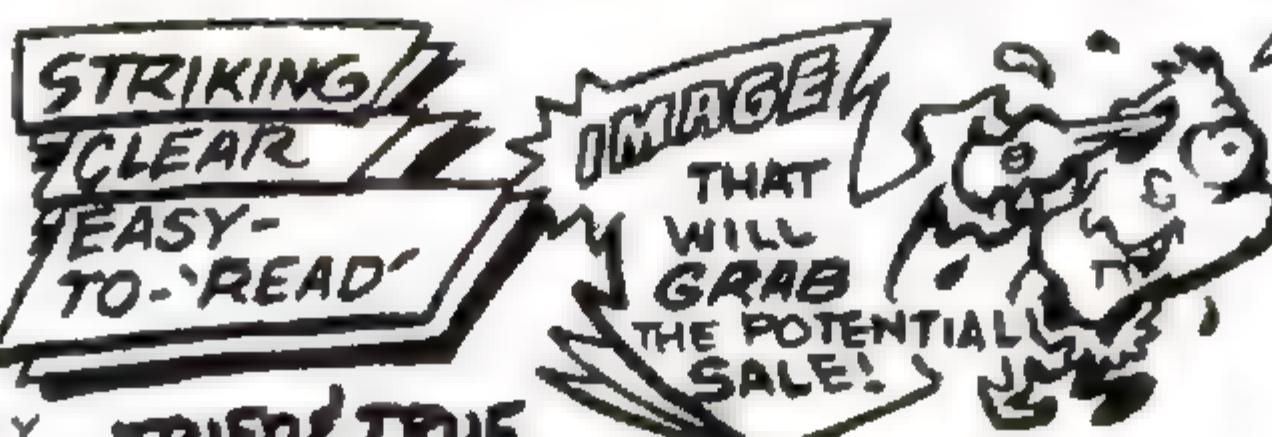


2

THE 'OUTSIDE' COVER - YOUR IMAGE IS EMBLEMATIC, CONVEYING THE ESSENCE AND FEEL OF THE CHARACTER AND IT'S WORLD - NOT AN ISSUE'S STORY EVENT.



YOU IMMEDIATELY BEGIN TO SEE WHERE YOUR PERSONAL 'CHARACTER PHILOSOPHY' BEGINS TO PAY OFF, GIVING YOU AN EDGE WHERE OTHERS HAVE HAD LESS DISTINGUISHED RESULTS. YOU CAN PRODUCE ROUGHS IN A VARIETY OF COMFORTABLE SIZES - STAY LOOSE - BUT YOU WANT TO PRODUCE A STRIKING, CLEAR, EASILY DISTINGUISHED IMAGE THAT WILL GRAB THE POTENTIAL SALE.



CHOOSE A POINT OF HIGHEST DRAMA (THE SALE HOOK), THE 'CENTER OF INTEREST' - AND, USING YOUR AFOREMENTIONED DRAWING TALENT, BEGIN COMPOSING.

THERE'S WONDERFUL VARIETY OF COVER DESIGNS, SOME WILDLY CONVENTION-CHALLENGING AND MANY REPUTABLE BUT FORMULAIC WORK HORSES. AS YOU WORK THROUGH OPTIONS AND INNOVATE SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR PARTICULAR JOB KEEP A STRONG, CLEAR CENTRAL IMAGE.

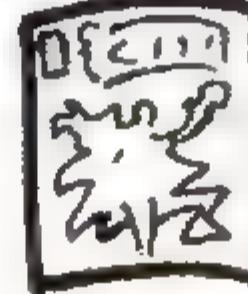
TRIED & TRUE  
HALL OF FAME



THE PYRAMID OR TRIANGLE COMPOSITION



THE GIANT, ODDLY CROPPED HEAD OR BODY



THE SINGLE FIGURE IN DRAMATIC POSE WITH LITTLE OR NO BACKGROUND

NO MATTER HOW MUCH IMAGERY YOU USE, STRIVE FOR CLARITY THROUGH SIMPLICITY OF DESIGN. YOUR FOREGROUND/BACKGROUND DEFINITION AND FLOW OF BLACKS HAVE TO KEEP THAT KEY CENTRAL ELEMENT IN FOCUS. KEEP THAT CONSUMER EYE COMING BACK AGAIN AND AGAIN.



I CANNOT STRESS ENOUGH THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR ROUGHS! YOUR IDEAS ARE SO IMPORTANT, AND MOST OF THE PROBLEM SOLVING IS DONE AT THIS CRUCIAL STAGE.

ARE YOU WORKING WITH, AGAINST, OR IF EDITORIALLY PERMITTED INVOLVING THE TYPE? THE LOGO, CAPTIONS, PRICE, ISSUE NUMBERS, ETC. CAN TAKE UP A LOT OF SPACE. IS ALL THIS TYPE STACKED OR SPECIALLY PLACED FOR A 'GIMMICK' COVER OR 'TREND'?

ARE YOU USING ALL YOUR GRAPHIC ELEMENTS TO PROPERLY COMMUNICATE DEPTH, FORM AND CLARITY WITH MAXIMUM EFFECT?

AS WELL AS ALL YOUR TALENT AND DRIVE YOU SHOULD BE CONSCIOUS OF THE LATEST COMICS 'LOOK'. COMICS, PERHAPS MORE SO THAN OTHER ENTERTAINMENT

MEDIUMS, HAVE RAPIDLY CHANGING TASTES AND TRENDS, 'THE FLAVOR OF THE MONTH'. EVER HAD TROUBLE DISCERNING ONE ARTIST FROM ANOTHER? HOW MANY 'NOT' TALENTS GOT STARTED BY SHAMELESS 'APING'? TO BE FRANK, IMITATION IS SOMETIMES MORE THAN FLATTERY - IT'S A WAY TO GET WORK ALTHOUGH SIMILAR WORK TENDS TO GIVE THE FIELD A FLAT, HOMOGENIZED LOOK IT CAN SOMETIMES BE A Viable OPTION AND SOMETHING TO BE AWARE OF AS YOU PURSUE YOUR AMBITIONS AND PERSONAL STYLE.



NOW, SUBMIT THOSE ROUGHS (CLEARLY LABEL THOSE ROUGHS FOR FAST, EASY I.D.) - WHEN IT FEELS RIGHT, YOU'LL KNOW IT. NEXT, GET THE EDITOR'S FEEDBACK A.S.A.P., MAKE ANY NECESSARY CHANGES, AND - YES - START THE FINAL PHYSICAL COVER ART!!



AS YOU BURN GRAPHITE, DON'T FORGET; ALL YOUR BEAUTIFUL RENDERING, DETAIL, ACCURACY AND FINESSE MAY BE USELESS IF YOU'VE SHORTCUT YOUR ROUGH STAGE OF CLARITY AND DESIGN PROBLEM SOLVING.

BUT ULTIMATELY, USING ALL YOUR STORED EXPERIENCE, PERSONAL TECHNIQUE AND CRAFTSMANSHIP.

SOME ARTISTS ENLARGE THE CHOSEN ROUGH, THEN TRACE OFF THEIR FINAL ART ON A LIGHT-BOX, MAKING CORRECTIONS AND CHANGES AS THEY GO. OTHER PENCILERS START TOTALLY FRESH, CREATING THE DESIRED IMAGE FROM THE GROUND UP! YOU'LL COME UP WITH YOUR OWN UNANTICIPATED METHODS AND SOLUTIONS.

MAKE THAT COVER GOLD! SELL THAT BOOK! AND MAKE THAT COVER YOUR VISUAL TRADEMARK, MORE RECOGNIZABLY YOURS THAN ANY OSTENTATIOUS SIGNATURE.



NOW GET IT TO THE EDITOR -WHEW- AND GET READY TO DO IT AGAIN! DO IT WITH CONVICTION - YOU SHOULD LOVE WHAT YOU DO; THE ACT AND THE MEDIUM WHETHER YOU CONSIDER COMIC ART, POP CULTURE, OR FLOOR PAPER IT'S A FORM THAT REQUIRES ENDLESS NEW VISIONS. IT'S A FORM THAT NEEDS INSPIRED INDIVIDUALS, NEW PEOPLE WITH FRESH IDEAS AND EXPERIENCED INDUSTRY INSIDERS WORKING, LEARNING, CREATING AND ENJOYING EACH OTHER TO GIVE EVERYONE OF ALL INTEREST GREAT ENTERTAINMENT, GREAT CREATIVITY, COMICS - GREAT COVERS - COMES FROM PASSION, NOT COMPLACENCY!



NOW GET DRAWING!! I'M ALWAYS LOOKING TO ~~SUPER~~ FOR NEW INSPIRATIONS!!



# The Universe at Your Finger Tips

## Thoughts on Scripting Comic Books

by Tom Bierbaum

So you're trying to write your very first comic-book script, and want to avoid some of the typical mistakes all those other writers made their first time out?

Well, I was once one of those writers making all those typical mistakes. In fact, I'm still making plenty of beginner's mistakes, many years later. So if you want a few tips from somebody who's intimately familiar with what not to do, you've come to the right place.

1.) Don't just start writing your story at the beginning and seeing where it goes from there. Plan ahead. Map out your story so you know how it's structured and how it'll effectively use the space available.

2.) But do treat that opening scene as a whole separate entity, worth all the focus and effort you can give it. Regard it as the most important scene you'll ever write, because if you don't make it a real grabber, none of those other scenes may ever see the light of day.

3.) Keep it simple. So many aspiring writers have great epic story lines and entire universes percolating in their imaginations, and they want to plunge readers into their complicated worlds right from the start.

But most beginning writers don't have the skills yet to communicate those kinds of lengthy, dense tales. Hone your craft on straightforward stories that hinge on simple, powerful concepts and conflicts. If you've got a good, bare-bones idea, it's easy and fun to add scenes that react to and further explore that idea. But it's tough to go in the other direction, and start cutting out parts of a complicated story because you're running out of room and things are getting too crowded.

4.) The same goes for your actual scripting: keep it lean. An old rule of thumb back when we were breaking in about 15 years ago was to try and limit your pages to no more than six panels, with 35 words or less in each panel. Shoot for that. Don't be afraid to occasionally go over those limits, but only occasionally.

If the artwork has already been drawn, make sure you script no more than what can fit in the spaces left by the artist. It's tough to estimate, so find examples in other comic books of balloons in similar-sized openings and literally count the number of words in those balloons to see what word count you should be shooting for.

On our very first pro-scripting assignment, we didn't do any of this and wrote literally about three times as much verbiage as could possibly fit in. Very embarrassing.

It's never easy to tell a story in the tiny little spaces the artists leave, but being able to do it is one of the skills that separates actual comic-book writers from aspiring comic-book writers.

5.) Along those lines, make sure your script fits the artwork, so that every caption and balloon will be positioned logically and read appropriately. If you envisioned Rat Man speaking first and Mouse Maid responding to him, but the artist draws it so Mouse Maid's balloon has to come first, re-work the scene so she speaks first and the scene still works.

Whenever the artwork is done before scripting, part of your job is to run off Xeroxes of the artwork and indicate on those Xeroxes where each balloon should be positioned. As you do this, you'll begin to discover panels that simply can't be balloonized as you had envisioned them, and again, it's your job to re-script the panel until it works, both in terms of both balloon positioning and effective storytelling.

Remember, of course, that comics are read left to right and up to down. You need to provide balloon positioning that smoothly leads the reader through each panel and into the next panel.

6.) At all times write from the perspective of somebody who doesn't know a thing about the story you're telling. Make sure the who, what, where, when and why are all somewhere down on paper, communicated in an artful, entertaining way, but there in black-and-white.

Have some non-fan third party read your script and see if he or she understands it. If you find yourself needing to verbally explain things to this person, remember that you can't go around to everyone who buys your comic and explain it to them too. Put the information you're explaining somewhere down on the page.

7.) If the art is drawn before you script, it becomes your job to make sure the information presented in the artwork is clearly understood. Any important detail that isn't clearly communicated in the artwork should be brought into focus in your script.

My generation of comic writers grew up on comics that hit you over the head with explanations, so we made it kind of an informal rule never to explain in the script something that's communicated in the artwork. But such redundancy can serve a purpose. If the visual information is important, it can help to draw extra attention to that information. If it's

very important, then by all means do what it takes to make sure the reader doesn't miss it.

8.) Want natural-sounding dialogue? Read your script out-loud. If a line sounds corny when you hear it aloud, it'll probably sound corny to the readers. When this happens, right on the spot, just try to communicate the necessary information the way you'd say it out loud in real life. Just say it. Try a few versions, and when something comes out that sounds natural, scribble it down and see if it doesn't work better in the script than what you'd written previously. Keep working at it 'til it sounds right.

Guess that's it for this time. Next time, we'll address some questions from you readers, including how to write a synopsis and what to put into a bible.

Tom can be reached at:  
tomb@bluelinepro.com



## Beginners Glossary of terms and tools.

**Bird's-eye view:** When the reader is above the scene looking down at it.

**Bleeder edge:** A beveled edge to a raisin edge to allow the inker to rule a line without bleeding.

**Blurb:** The copy which relate to the title.

**Caption:** Copy in which a character is talking to the reader, but which is not within the dialogue balloons.

**Circle and ellipse templates:** Comes in many shapes and sizes most have raised edges for inking.

**Close-ups:** The reader is about as close to the subject as possible.

**Compass:** Used to draw/ink circles. Most have interchangeable heads for penciling and inking.

**Copy:** The text which that tells a story.

**Contour Line:** The outline of a figure or object.

**Crosshatching:** A technique of graduating light to dark by drawing layers of parallel intersecting lines.

**Crow-quill pens:** Hunt's 102 mapping tips are the industry standard; use Hunt 107 for a flatter line, Hunt 512 for a bolder line. Interchangeable tips that are dipped into ink.

**Cursive Line:** A flowing ink line that start thin on one end, thicker in the middle, then thin again on the other end.

**Dead Weight Line:** A line with a consistent width. No variation in line thickness.

**Drawing table:** A smooth adjustable surface to draw upon.

**Erasers:** Higgins, Magic Rub, or Staedtler Puraplast.

**Feathering:** A series of lines that start thin and end thick.

**Filling in blacks:** Inking in the solid black areas on a page, where its been indicated by the penciller (Not to be confused with spotting blacks).

**Finishes:** These are the spotting of blacks, the addition of details, textures to an unfinished pencilled page such as a layout or breakdown.

**Force lines:** The long, feather or cursive line that emphasizes motion or action by surrounding and pointing toward the movement.

**French curves:** Comes in several different shapes. Used to ink curves.

**Frisket:** Used for masking off art when you apply a splatter or other effects. The frisket blocks the area that you don't want to changed.

**Grease pencil:** Used for a rough effect.

**Gutters:** The white space between panels and around the edge of a page.

**Horizon Line:** Represents the viewer's eye level.

**India ink:** Higgins, FW, Black Magic or Pelikan water proof drawing ink.

**Indicia:** An area to has the publishers information, when the issue was printed and the copyright and trademark information.

**Inking brushes:** Winsor & Newton series 7 in numbers 2 or 3.

**Line weight:** The thickness of an ink line.

**Long shot:** A panel in which the reader has pulled as far back as possible without loosing detail.

**Loose:** A pencilling style that is sketchy or vague, or a inking style that is less controlled and spontaneous.

**Medium shot:** The reader is from farther away and enables them to see the figures from head to toe.

**Negative space:** The white space on an inked page.

**Non-photo blue:** A non-reproductive blue that will disappear when photocopied shot on a camera.

**Non-photo blue pencil:** A non-reproductive blue pencil that is used by pencillers for layouts or finished drawing.

**Open letters:** Letters that are drawn in outline with space for color to be added.

**Perspective:** The ability to draw an object to look realistic.

**Plot:** The writer gives the basics of the story.

**Pointers:** The tails of a balloon that show who is talking.

**Rotring pens:** A combination crow-quill tips with a ink cartridge like those in tech pens.

**Ruler:** Used to measure a unit of space or to draw/ink a straight line. Make sure it has a bleeder edge.

**Script:** May include the plot. But focuses of what the characters are saying.

**Silhouette:** A drawing in which the details are obscured by solid blacks.

**Sound effects:** Creative lettering used to represent a sound.

**Splash page:** The first page of a story with a large introductory illustration.

**Spotting blacks:** This means deciding where to insert solid blacks on an unfinished page then filling them in.

**Thought balloons:** A balloon border that has bumps around it.

**Title:** The name of the story.

**T-square:** Used to square up the art boards and to draw straight horizontal lines. Also used in combination with a tri-angle to draw vertical lines.

**Technical (tech) pens:** Staedtler disposable or Rotring Rapidoliner, in sizes 0.3, 0.35 and 0.7mm.

**Terse line:** A contour line that begins thin and ends thick..

**Tracing paper:** Used to ink over penciled pages.

**White (out) ink:** FW white and Pro White work on most black inks.

**Worms-eye view:** The reader is looking up at the scene from the ground.

**X-acto knife:** Used to cut frisket, Zip-a-Tone or art boards.

**Zip-a-Tone:** A shading film that comes in a wide variety of dot patterns and textures printed on a transparent sheet with an adhesive on the back side.

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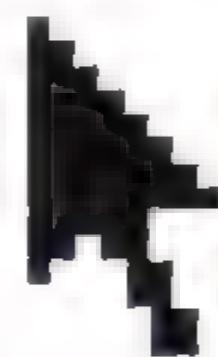
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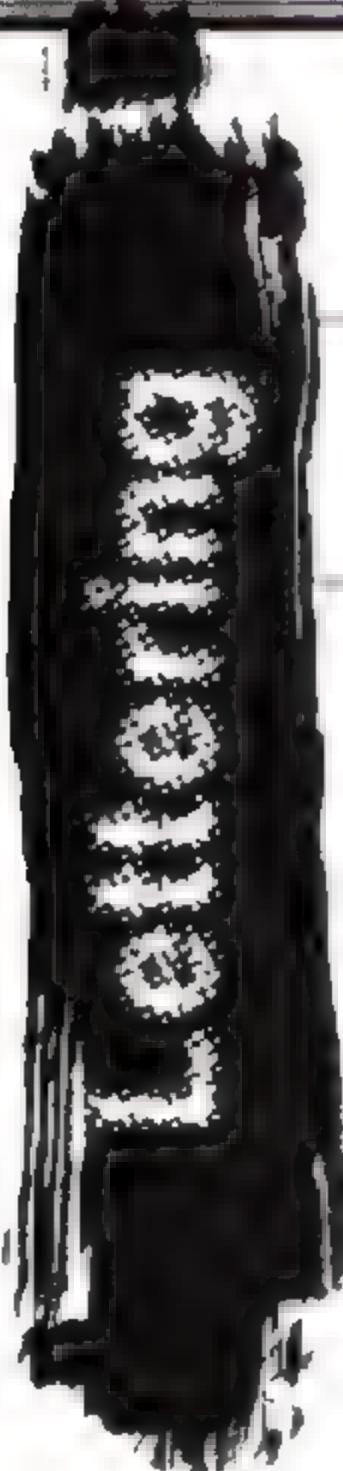


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## Digital Lettering

by Ward LeRoc

Last article we discussed the process of preparing the comic book page that you are lettering.

Before we begin lets review a few things...

Watch the size of your type. The size of fonts varies from font manufacturers. Be sure to print out a balloon that you have lettered and hold it up against a balloon from a book that you like. Try to match the size of the font.

Allow enough line spacing. Don't allow the bottom of your g's, y's, etc. to touch the top of your letters below them.

Be sure to allow enough room between your type and the word balloon.

### BALLOONS, CAPTION...

#### Word Balloons...

Word balloons can be any shape or size. Many specialty comic book fonts offer balloons to be imported into your lettering program. Most of these are "eps" files which allows them to be enlarged or reduced depending on the amount of text going inside of them.

In Corel Draw a .eps file can be changed very easily either by changing the over all size or by working the "nodes". A node is

where the image has a change in direction, you can use this to change the size of the balloon or the tail. Many times the balloon will fit but the tail needs to be moved to work with the artwork.

The node allows you to move the tail without changing the shape of the balloon or the size of the outline

The outline is usually set to a 1-point thickness. The outline is easily changed by using the outline tool and changing the thickness.

#### When to use a curved tail and a straight tail?

Remember every rule has its exceptions, but, usually I'll use a curved tail when the characters are in a normal conversation. When the characters or words are more extreme then I'll use a straight tail to stress the importance of the situation.

#### Thought Balloons...

The thought balloon works the same as the word balloon. Be sure that the writer has specified a thought balloon. Some writers would prefer to use a caption box instead of a thought balloon.

#### Caption boxes...

Caption boxes can be simple with a single border or more complexed with a double outline or a shadow box behind caption box. You can use shades of colors or grays to show if it's a narrative box or a character box. Simple artwork or images can be placed behind the text instead of colors.

Certain projects like SAM AND TWICH for Image Comics has the lettering laid on top of the artwork with out a balloon only a tail to direct the text to the right character. The biggest problem is losing the text into the artwork. Be sure that the text stands out enough to be read.

When the reader has to work hard to read the words then you may lose them.

Remember lettering can be a creative process to add to the enjoyment of the project.

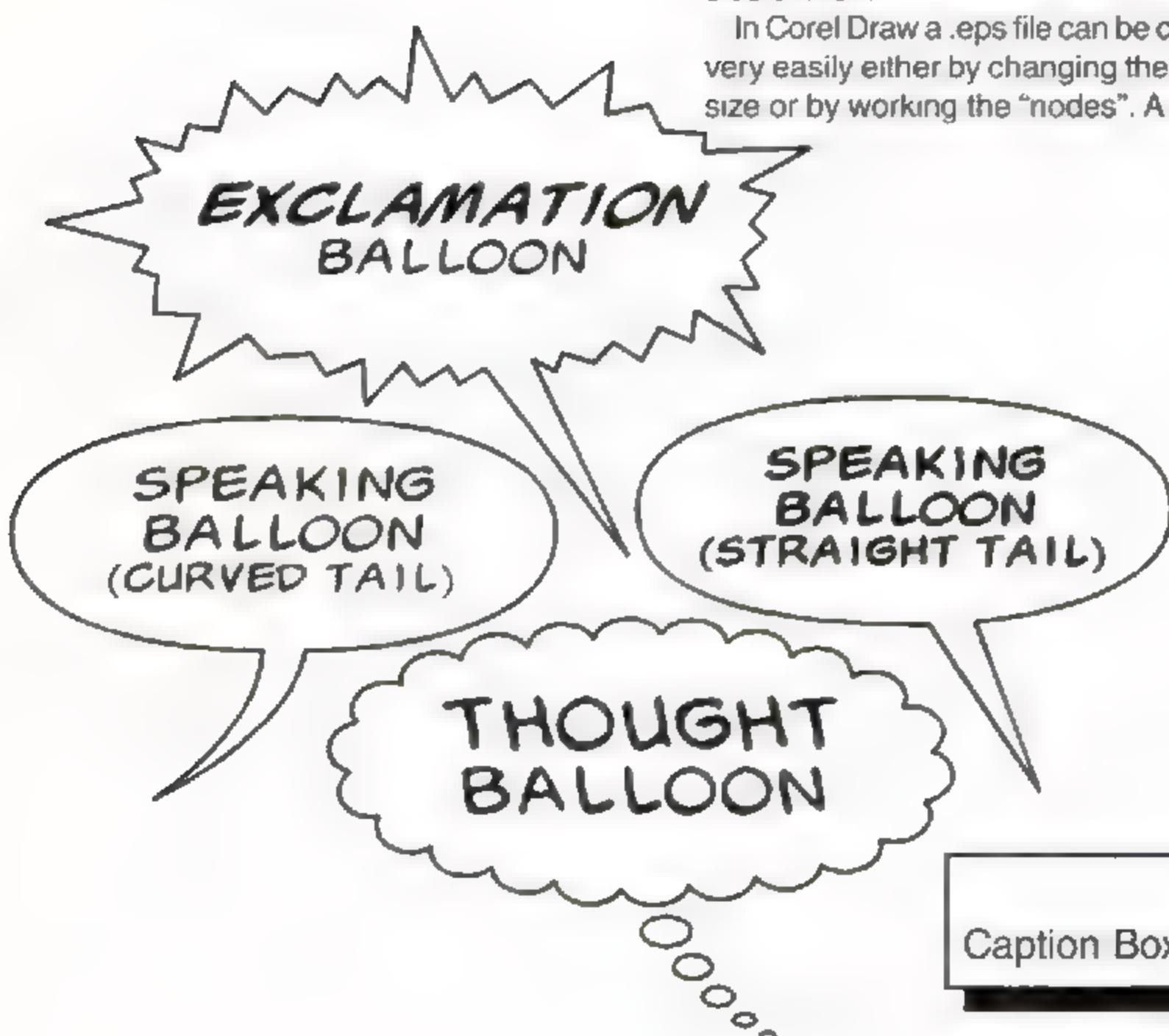
#### Next time...

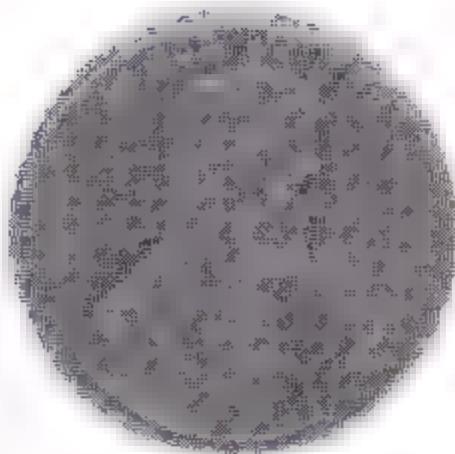
Making sound effects

Ward can be reached at [wardl@bluelinepro.com](mailto:wardl@bluelinepro.com) or at Lettering c/o Sketch Magazine, 8385-A U.S. Highway 42, Florence, KY 41042

Caption Box with Drop Shadow.

Caption Box with 10% Screen  
Artwork Placed Inside.





## Tool Tips

Inkers, your best friend may be Abraham Lincoln.

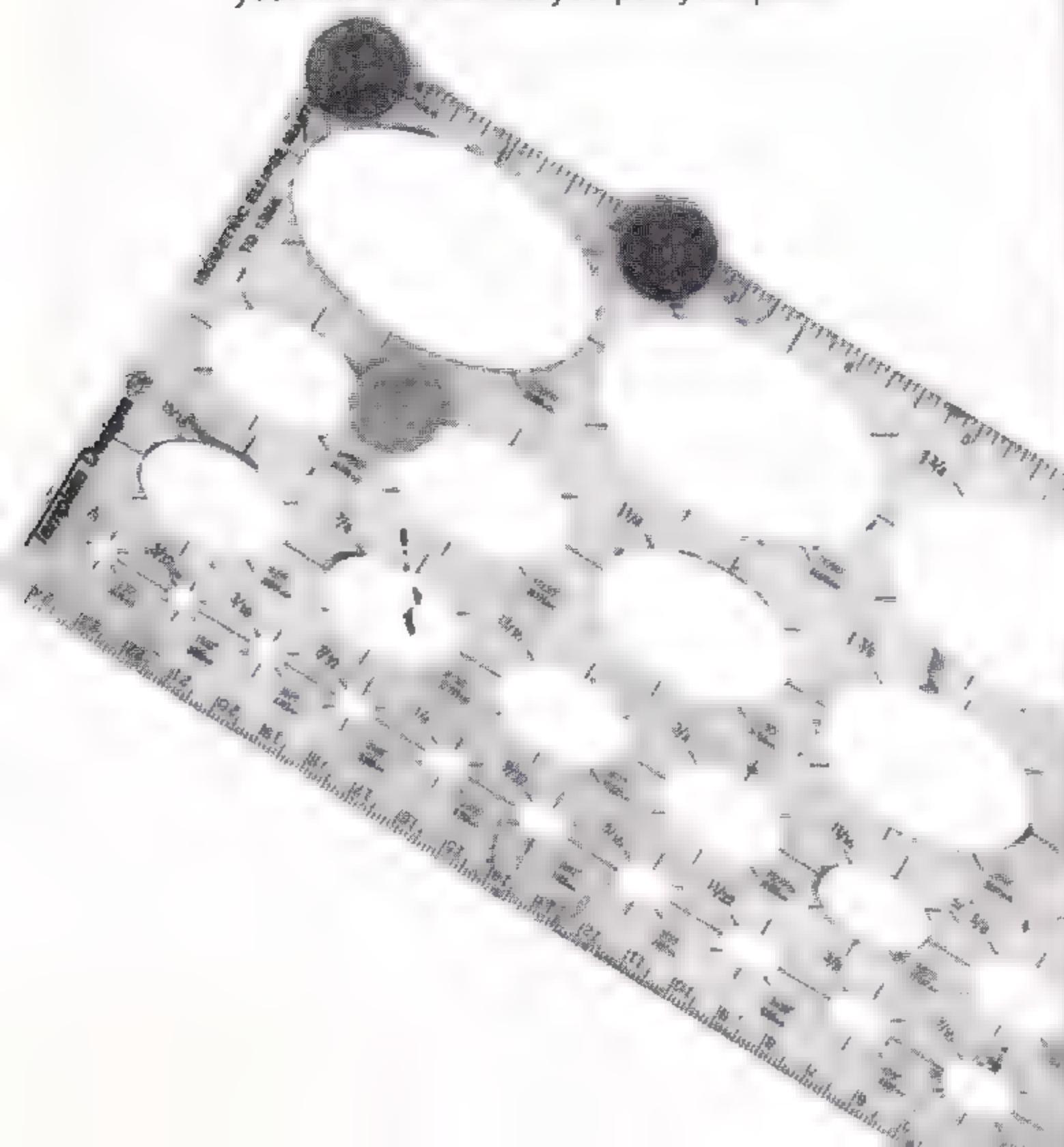
An inker's edge is definitely their best friend. An inker's edge allows the edge of your tools (rulers, circle templates, french curves) to be raised off the paper so the edge of your pen (quill, tech pen, marker, etc.) does not touch the edge of your tools. If they touch the ink will bleed under the tool and cause a mess.

The inker's edge can be found on most triangles, french curves and acrylic rulers, metal rulers usually will have a cork backing and most circle templates will have small bumps to lift the template off the page.

Have you ever had to ink a huge building and the only straight edge you have doesn't have an inking edge.

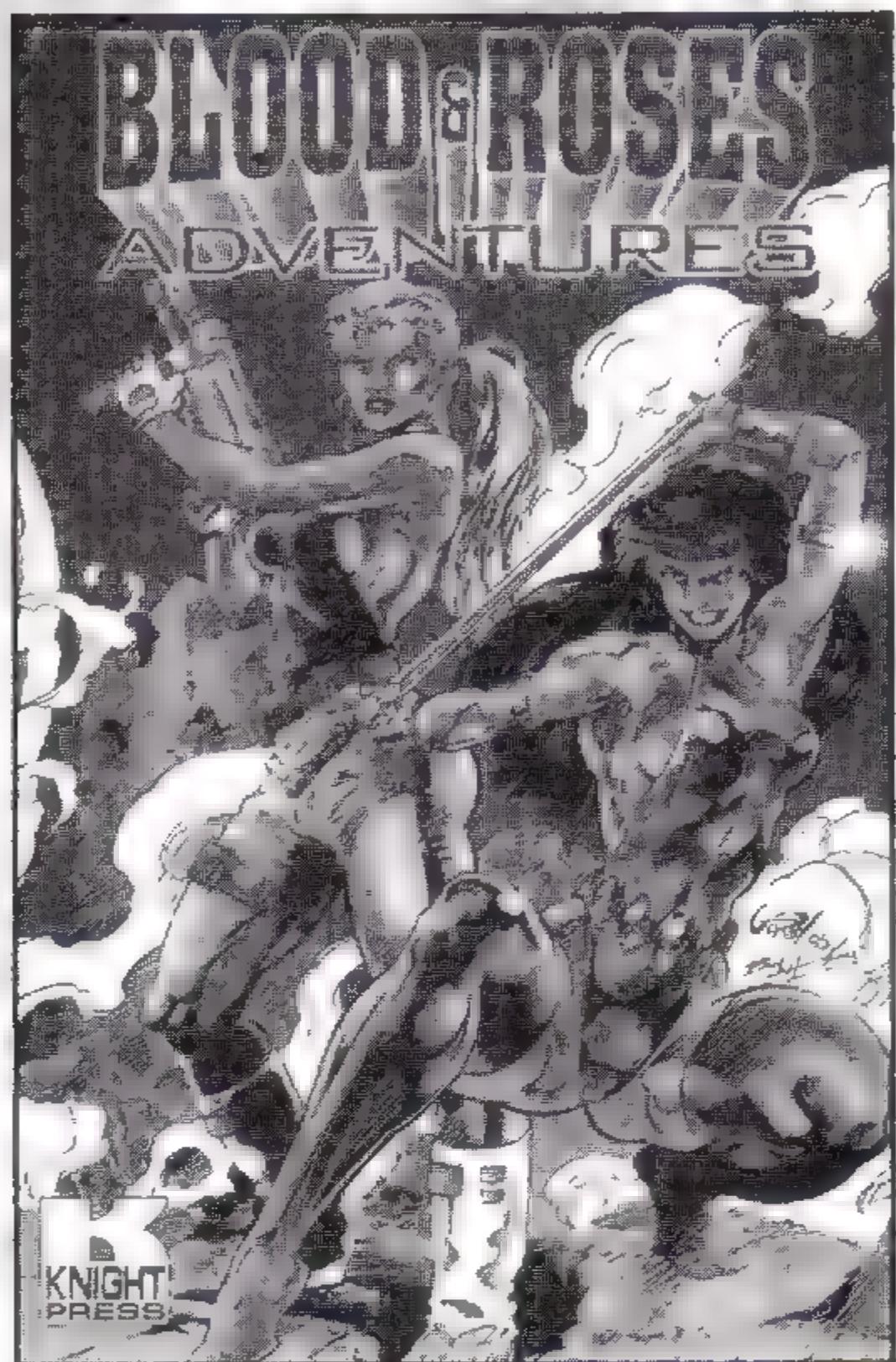
One simple solution is to flip your template over and tape several pennies on the back of it. The penny will lift the template off the paper enough to allow a good line without touching. Remember to keep the penny back from the edge so your pen doesn't touch it. If it touches you may get a bleed.

Watch for ink buildup on the edge of your templates. When the ink dries on the edge it can cause small bumps on the edge surface and cause your line to move as you pull your pens.



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## Setting up your **PORTFOLIO**

A portfolio review maybe one of the hardest things you have to do to work in the comic book industry. But with just a few tips you can make it easier for you and the person doing the review.

Your portfolios need to be organized and simple. The viewer (editor-publisher) will have very little time and may have to look at hundreds of portfolios that day.

So when you setup your portfolio remember these few tips:

- Show only your most recent work.
- Ten or less pieces of artwork. (Don't over load the viewer)
- No pin-ups.
- Show pages the original sizes. (11x17)
- Story pages. Pages should show that you can draw perspectives, buildings, rooms, vehicles, etc, superheroes, fantasy, a variety of subjects need to be included.
- Try to use a portfolio with attached pages so the viewer can flip through them easily. Loose pages are hard for the viewer to handle.
- Try to use a portfolio about the same size of your pages. An over sized portfolio is awkward to handle when sitting at a table.
- Have copies of your pages in an envelope so you can leave them with the viewer. Be sure to place your contact information on each page in case they get separated. You can also include more pages then you have in your portfolio and a few of your best pin-ups in these packs.
- Have a second portfolio with additional pages if the viewer ask to see more of your artwork. Be sure to place only your best work in this portfolio.
- If you design a business card, place a piece of your best artwork on it to remind the viewer of your work.



A well-designed portfolio is a trait of organization. This is very important when a future employer is wanting you to handle strict deadlines.

Remember to be courteous even if the viewer tells you to stay with your day job. He may be the same person you see at the next portfolio review and you don't want him remembering you because of a rude remark.

The viewer could be a future employer. Handle a portfolio review the same as you would handle a job interview. After all they are the same.

# The Basic Color Mediums

By Steve Olliff

Over the 20 years of my comic coloring career my styles and techniques have changed several times. Things are primarily different because of advances in the color reproduction side of the business. When I first started out at Marvel in 1978, I was given photostats to color on. Photostats are copies of the original comic book lineart on a photographic paper. Photostats have a slick surface. This meant that I had to use Dr. Martin's dyes, water soluble felt pens, or acrylic paints. Nothing else would stick to that surface. Once I began coloring on bluelines in 1986, I was able to also use Gouache (opaque watercolor) and colored pencils. Blueline is a term for a European system where the color is done on art paper that has been lightly printed with a blue copy of the lineart. Hence the name. A black plate overlay on clear acetate is then used on top of the color. When you line up the black lineart over the color, you have a pretty fair idea of how the color will work. The first book I ever colored using Blueline was the Time2 graphic novel by Howard Chaykin from First Comics.

The next phase of my coloring career was completely changed by computers, and yet one thing remained the same. The techniques that I'd developed for coloring on Bluelines translated very well to the color guides that I needed to give to the computer separators. The only real difference was that instead of working on good art paper and doing finished work that would then be scanned, I was making a color guide on a Xerox that was translated by a separator. This meant that I didn't have to complete all the details. All the finish work would be reserved for the final product, which would only exist in the computer until it saw print. I still do lots of detail work on guides, even though many things get lost in translation. The skill of the individual color separator makes all the difference in how well the pages come out. Many computer colorists skip the color guide entirely, and prefer to work directly in Photoshop on their screens.

However, I'm from the old school. I find it's easier for me to visualize with pens and paint on paper than it is on a computer screen.

My coloring technique combines four basic mediums:

- **Felt Pens**
- **Paint**
- **Colored Pencil**
- **Airbrush**

Each medium has a particular stylistic feel. Each one gives a little different flavor to the mix. The one you begin with determines your end result, but it's how you combine them that makes it all work.

Any one of these techniques can deliver a good job of coloring on a finished piece of art. Especially if you have lots of time.

The guides I generally color are not finished art. And you must be aware that time is always tight in the comic book business. That's why I've developed a fast system of color that gives me maximum expression, and plenty of flexibility.

Here is a brief description of what to expect from each of the mediums listed above, and how I use them.





### Felt Pens

On a color guide I use both the water based pens (Marvy Markers, Pentel, Tombow, and Stabilayout) and the alcohol based pens (Prismacolor, Tria, Design, etc.). The alcohol pens are good for large areas and full saturation. They also have a good range of pale colors. (These pens were designed to be used for architectural rendering so there are lots of colors that duplicate the look and feel of common building materials.) These pens are excellent for washes and toning colors after you've laid in the basics. Because of the juiciness of the pens you always have to be careful with them because they will bleed. If you are trying to stay in the lines, you need to leave a little spread room as you put your color down. It will also bleed through your copies, so work on pages one at a time, or put a blank sheet of paper under the page to absorb any bleed through. These colors have a different intensity than the water-based markers. Generally it is a little less intense. The Tria pens are nice because you can refill them, but they tend to fade quickly.

The water-based pens don't blend as well on regular paper, but they are great for laying in costume colors, and doing detail work. They won't bleed through, or bleed out of the lines. A trick I use is to have two pens for each color. One is new and full strength, the other is an older pen that I use for shading and blending. It's important to follow the form of the figures with these pens, since you will get some streaking. It's always best if lines do show up to have them at least going in the right direction.

One thing with felt pens is that you should always test the colors before you leap in. There are many variations in the pens. Sometimes they get the wrong color ink in them. Sometimes the plastic pen color really isn't very close to the actual color of the ink. Certain colors, which you'd think would be standard, aren't. Red, for instance, has an amazing variety of ink variations. Each company has its own variations. Some are rich reds, some are kind of dead. The only way to figure out which is which is through trial and error. Eventually you find out which pens give you the colors you like. Some colors only come from one brand of pens. The others don't even have any equivalents. That's why I use a variety. There are also a bunch of different tips. There are brush pens (Tombows), chisel point (Stabilayout), medium round point (Marvy Markers), and fine point, (Pentel). The Alcohol based Prismacolor pens have two tips. One is a broad chisel tip, and the other is an ultra-fine point. I find their fine point too fine. It tends to dry out and become useless far before the rest of the pen is dry.

### Paint

I use Gouache primarily. It is opaque watercolor. It's easier to use than regular transparent watercolor. I can lay it on thick and get nice flat areas, or I can thin it down to achieve washes. Gouache is fairly expensive paint, but you can find brands of poster paint that are actually the same thing, but at much cheaper prices. I tend to use Windsor Newton paints. It's a quality brand.

Paint gives me the flexibility to mix my own colors, which frees me from the somewhat limited palettes of felt pens. I can also paint over the pens and tone the basic colors with ease. Since gouache isn't like acrylic paint, it can be re-wet and then modified. I use two or three brushes. A half inch flat, a small flat, and a pointed watercolor brush. If you look at a Windsor Newton catalogue, you'll find many great brushes. I have some very nice expensive brushes, which I use for special projects, but most of my brushes are moderately priced. I'm hard on my regular working brushes, so I don't want to worry about hurting them.

### Colored Pencils

Colored pencils are great for shading. Again, I use two different types. Caran D'Ache watercolor pencils, and Prismacolor or Derwent regular colored pencils. The water soluble pencils I will often use at the beginning of a page. I lay in a dark value to set up the light and shading, and then use the paint or the water-soluble felt pens to blend out the color. Once the water hits the pencil, it becomes like watercolor. The Caran D'ache pencils are my favorite because of their nice soft leads. I hate hard leaded colored pencils. They don't blend. Unfortunately, most colored pencils for children are this type.

When I was in the third grade, the same time I discovered Marvel comics, my mother gave me her set of 128 Prismacolor colored pencils. These are soft-leaded, waxy pencils that have great covering power. These pencils allowed me to be a lot more sophisticated with my color than with crayons.

After all the color has been put on a page, I'll use colored pencils to add hi-lights, round forms, and polish things up. I use my fingers a lot for blending.



### Airbrush

This has been my secret weapon for years. It got me my first work for Byron Preiss, which really started my professional career. Airbrush is the easiest way to cover a lot of ground on a guide. It lays the color down smoothly, and allows me to tone a whole section of the story after the basic skin and costume colors have been put in. I'll use a corner frisket to help me darken panels. By spraying in a dark blue or a gray, I can darken the edges to accentuate the action in the center of the panel. It's called vignetting.

I use Dr. Martin's dyes, and acrylic airbrush paint. The acrylic I can spray and then work over without smearing. The Dr. Martin's dyes are very fragile, but extremely vibrant. These dyes were the main colors used in comic book coloring for many, many years. The dyes are best used in guides, since their chemical composition makes reproducing some of the colors very tricky. They also fade quickly. You don't want to leave your guides sitting in the sun too long if you've used dyes, or felt pens, for that matter.

These are the basic color mediums I use. Whichever one I start a page with determines the basic direction of the page. I vary my technique for special circumstances, and to keep myself from getting bored. If you throw yourself a curve now and again, I think it adds a bit of energy to your work.

Try out a few of these, and have fun.

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steveo@bluelinepro.com



# DIGITAL COLORING

## Digital Coloring

By Christopher Riley

### A Review of Last Issue

Last issue we covered the basics of setting up a line art image for coloring. We also went over equipment that is needed to create digital masterpieces. For those of you who missed it go out and get a copy. This month we are going to dive into the techniques of digital coloring. Focusing in on lighting and shading and what tools to use to achieve the greatest results. Some of the tools we are going to be using in this exercise are as follows: Lasso, Magic Wand, Dodge, Burn, Zoom, and the Airbrush Tool. If you do not know much about these tools get out your Photoshop book and read up on them. They are invaluable for creating the effects you see in well-colored comic books.

**Some of the most basic steps in coloring may seem very elementary but they must be learned before you can proceed to more complicated tasks.**



## Stay in the lines

One of the time saving techniques I use when coloring is to lay in the general flat colors that are to be used in the image. The key here is to fill in SOLID areas of color that are different from one another so that they can be easily selected later with the Magic Wand. You can always go back and change the base colors later. To insert in the colors, you have to be on the Color Layer (see last issue). Grab the Lasso Tool and draw around a specific object in your image like a gun (you may have to zoom in first). Once you have the object selected go to the Color or Swatches Palette and select the color you want it to be. Now go to the Edit drop down menu and select Fill. In the Fill box select "Use: Foreground Color", "Opacity: 100%", and "Mode: Normal". Click OK. It should fill what you have selected with your specified color. I know to some of you this may seem elementary but I am trying to make this be understood by everyone out there. You can now go through and select the different objects in the page and fill them with their colors. I usually fill the skin, clothing, accessories, and the background separately.

## Fleshing Things Out

Now that we have our base colors laid in we can move on to shaping the image. Using the Magic Wand tool with the Anti-aliased turned off select the skin base color that you have filled on the Color Layer. Now grab the burn tool and set it to Shadows and a low exposure of 30%. Select a larger brush so that you can apply soft shading to the area. Run the brush along the edge of the skin to darken the skin. Try this at different exposures until you are happy with the results. You can now change from Shadows to Highlights on the burn tool. Set the exposure very low for this. When you run this over the same area that you just burned it will add magenta and red to the gray skin tone. This will liven up the image. Once again do this at different exposures until you are happy with the finished result. Now that you have a color that you are happy with select the Eye Dropper tool and sample the darkest part of the burned color. You will use this in combination with the Airbrush at different opacities to color the other shaded areas. After finishing the shading it is time for the lighting. Now select the Dodge Tool. Set it to Dodge Highlights and a low exposure. Now grab another large brush and go over where you want you highlight. Adjust your exposure accordingly so that when you apply your brush to the skin it does not put a blatant airbrushed highlight. Keep it smooth. Now grab a slightly smaller brush and do the same thing in the center of the area you just went over. Keep doing this until you get your desired effect.



The original Line Art



A view of the flat colors filled in behind the line art.



A view of the line art overlaying the flat colors.



## The Tools of Photoshop

### The Dodge and Burn Tool

This month we are going to highlight the Dodge and Burn tools from the Adobe Photoshop Tool Palette. These tools are used to create highlights and shadows on your colored image. The tools can be used to either lighten or darken pixels in small or large areas. Using the Options Palette you can select from three different settings that will give you different results. You can apply the tools to the Shadows, Midtones, or Highlights. Use the Exposure Slider to adjust the pressure. You will want to start off with a low setting so that you do not darken or bleach areas too quickly. Also use a soft tip brush to get the smoothest results. Just like using the Airbrush stroke over an area that you want to add a shadow or a highlight. Play around with the different settings and notice the different result you get.

Something I use the Dodge and Burn tools for is to create the color of the shadows that I will want to apply to the rest of the area whether it be skin or clothing. I will create the desired shadow in one area and select that area with the Eye Dropper and add that color to my Swatches palette to be used later. One last thing to remember, the Dodge and Burn tools can only be used on an image in Grayscale, RGB or CMYK Mode.

Another way to add a highlight is to use the Polygonal Lasso Tool. If you are coloring metal you may want to have hard instead of soft highlights. Select the Polygonal Lasso Tool and turn on the Anti-aliased. You may also want to set the Feather to 1 pixel to keep the line from being too rigid. Select a small area in the place you want to highlight. Now fill this area with white at a 15-20% opacity (this may vary). Take the lasso tool and draw another smaller area inside of the other area. Now fill this with the same opacity. You can keep doing this until you get a white highlight. The airbrush tool can also be used in combination with the Lasso tool to get varied effects. Now apply these techniques to the rest of your image and don't be afraid to experiment. Just remember to save often in case your computer locks up.

### Finishing Things Up

Now that you have your finished artwork you need to get it set up to go to the printer. In the last issue we discussed working in RGB mode with the CMYK preview turned on. If this is the mode you are working in you will need to convert your image to CMYK under the Image and Mode drop down list. Now you must flatten your artwork. To do this go to the Layers Palette select the arrow and click Flatten Image. Once this is done your artwork is ready to save as a .tif or .eps file and import into another program to place the logo on it.

### Extra Effects

There are other effects you can add to an image after it is colored and flattened. For metallic objects you can come back in with a transparent white airbrush and add bright highlights over top of the black line art.

Another nice touch is adding real photos to your image. This can work if it's done in moderation. You don't want to use anything too overpowering. To do this you will want to use the Magic Wand Tool with the Anti-alias turned off and select the area you want the image to be in. Open your scanned image. Select all of it and do a copy under the edit drop down list. Now go back to your other file that has the selected area for the image. Click on the edit drop down and select paste into. You can go in and move the image around once it is pasted.

That is all for this issue. Check back in future issues of Sketch Magazine for more installments.

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A view of the gun fully rendered using the Dodge, Burn, Lasso, and Airbrush Tools. Notice the hard highlights created using the Lasso Tool and a white Airbrush.



Here is another view of the gun with the background screened out. Remember to always pick a light source. You can also have multiple light sources.



Along with his duties with Sketch Magazine, **Bob Hickey** has been the creative force behind Blood & Roses, StormQuest and Tempered Steele an online netcomic beginning in June, 2000 at [www.sacredstudios.com](http://www.sacredstudios.com) He oversees production at Sacred Studios which is currently packaging Parts Unknown for Image Comics.

Bob is one of the co-founders of Blue Line Productions.



**Beau Smith** created and writes Parts Unknown currently at Image Comics, writer of The Undertaker for Chaos Comics, The Tenth, Wynonna Earp, Spawn: Book Of Souls, Batman/Wildcat and the two upcoming cross overs-Xena/Wonder Woman and Wolverine/Shi.



**Chris Riley** has done everything from lettering and paste-up to full comic book production. In his time he has helped to publish over 40 comic books for various publishers and self-published two of his own books. He has been doing computer coloring for over seven years. Some of his current projects include a Parts Unknown mini-series for Image Comics, Sketch Magazine, various CD labels for bands and DJ's, and self publishing his comic book Brainwalker.

**Tom Bierbaum** with wife Mary has scripted such comics as Legion of Super-Heroes and The Heckler for DC Comics, Xena and Return to Jurassic Park for Topps Comics, Star for Image Comics and Dead Kid Adventures a creator owned project by Knight Press.

**Steve Oliff** is the founder of Olyoptics. Steve has over 20 years of experience in the industry. From the full color TV adaptation of the Hulk in 1978, to Akira in '88, and the computer revolution, to Spawn and the Maxx. He's colored in every style imaginable, and for almost every publisher.

We are looking for creators to share their insights, experiences and tips. If you work in the comic book industry and would like to contribute to Sketch Magazine. Contact Bob Hickey at 859-282-0096 / fax: 859-282-9412 or / email: [bobh@bluelinepro.com](mailto:bobh@bluelinepro.com).



**Joe Corroney** is the instructor for Comic Book-Cartoon Illustration class at the Columbus College of Art and Design in Columbus, Ohio. He has worked on various comic books for a variety of publishers including Dead-Kid and Blood and Roses for Knight Press, Green Lantern for DC Comics, and his creator-owned title for World Famous Comics, Death Avenger which will premiere later this year. His freelance art career includes working as an illustrator for White Wolf Games and official licensees such as Lucasfilm, Sony, and Paramount Pictures creating artwork for Star Wars, Men In Black, and Star Trek books and magazines. He is currently creating artwork for the new Image series, Parts Unknown, and penciling a new Blood and Roses story.

You can see more of Joe's artwork and visit his official website through the World Famous Comics website, [www.wfcomics.com](http://www.wfcomics.com), when it debuts later this year.

You can view his online portfolio now at <http://www.adobe.com/eportfolio/JoeCorroney>

You can also view online galleries of his published and unpublished Star Wars art at the following websites.

[www.theforce.net/cgi-bin/museum/  
imageFolio.cgi](http://www.theforce.net/cgi-bin/museum/imageFolio.cgi)  
[www.echostation.com/interview/corroney.htm](http://www.echostation.com/interview/corroney.htm)  
[downtime.echostation.com/lanart/jcorroney.html](http://downtime.echostation.com/lanart/jcorroney.html)  
[www.rebelpilots.com/](http://www.rebelpilots.com/)

**Dan Davis** was born in Celina, Ohio on Sept. 18, 1957. A very short time later he was hooked on comics, both strips and books and decided to make it his career.

After a brief stint apprenticing for New York comic book artist Dan Adkins, he returned to Ohio to finish college and find a "real" job. But he kept sending samples to the large comic companies and freelancing on the side to the small ones.

Finally in 1990 DC comics liked his inks enough to send him a Flash Annual and soon he was in the comics business full time. Since then he has worked on many popular characters such as Superman, Superboy, Animaniacs, Flintstones/Jetsons, Scooby-Doo, Garfield, and Alley Oop. And recently he's added writing and penciling credits to his established inking credentials. Currently he is busy inking the Star Spangled Kid comic book, Stars and S.T.R.I.P.E. at DC, and continues to freelance on various comic projects. He lives in Celina, Ohio with his wife Lisa, and kids Alex and Hannah.

## COMIC BOOK ART TIPS & TECHNIQUES

# SKETCH

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